Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

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James Agee

BERTRAND de JOUVENEL
Rousseau

CLEMENT GREENBERG
Rosenberg's Action

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Old Ibsen: New Vic

THOMAS MANN
LETTERS

RICHARD LOWENTHAL
After Cuba, Berlin?

MARCUS CUNLIFFE
Mancunian Dirt

HERBERT LUETHY
The Swiss Future

A Symposium – 31 Writers Reply
GOING INTO EUROPE

111
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MONTHLY 3s. 6d.

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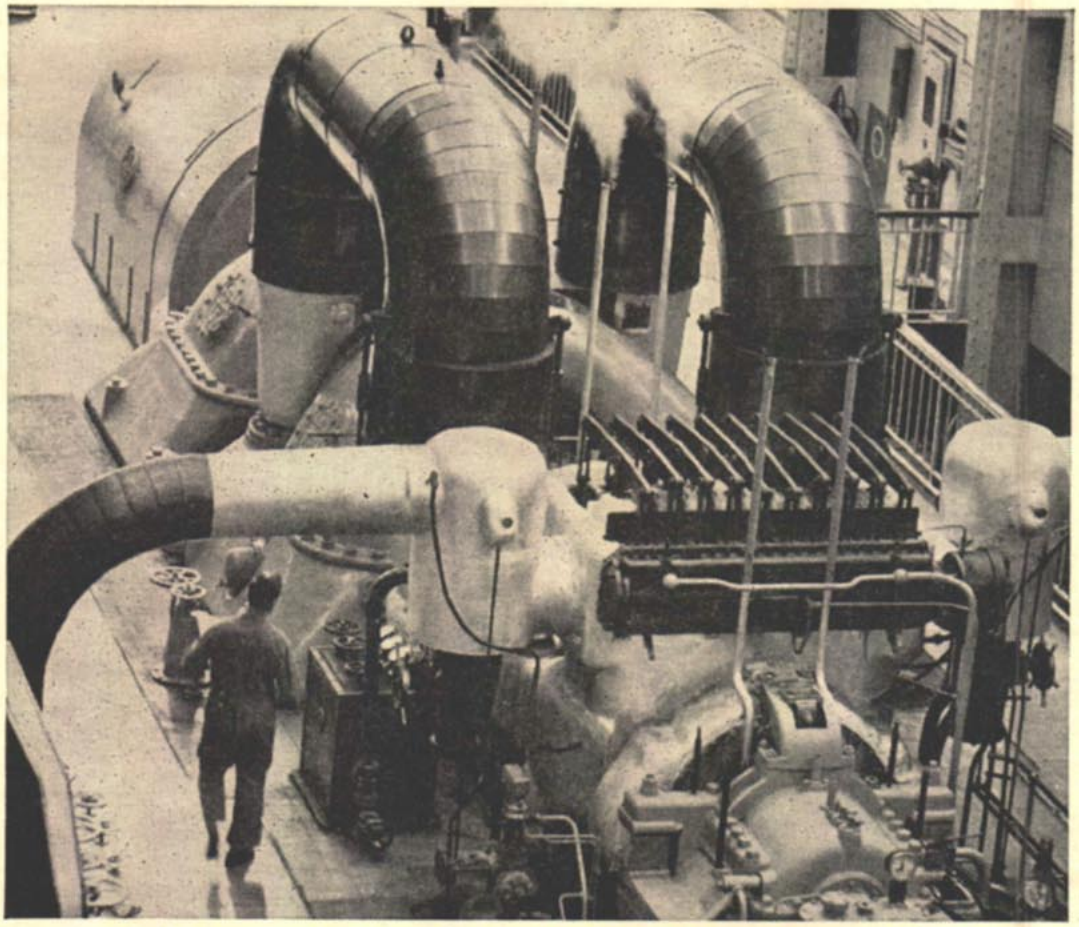

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Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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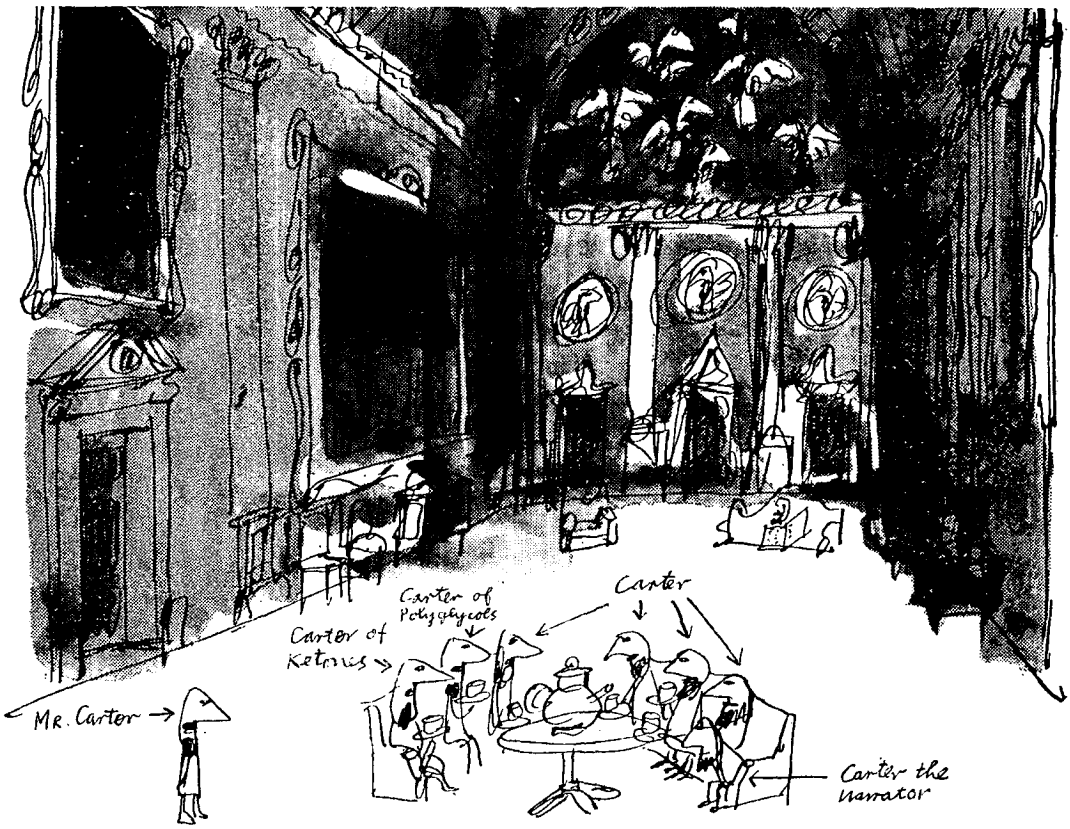

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Letters of Thomas Mann

Munich, January 3, 1919

Dear Heinrich[1]:

Your letter reaches me at a moment when it is physically impossible for me to answer it adequately. I am obliged to take a two weeks' trip which I curse, which I am not at all in the mood for, but to which for better or worse I have agreed. But I also wonder how much point there would be in squeezing the bitter thoughts of two years into a letter that would have to be much longer than yours. I take your word for it that you feel no hatred for me. In your present situation, and particularly after unburdening yourself with an outburst such as your essay on Zola, you have no ground for hatred whatever. The word *"Brüderhass"* (brother-hatred) should be considered rather as a symbol for more general contradictions in your Rousseau-ist psychology.

If you have had a hard time with me, I have had a much harder one with you: that is only natural: and I too have done my honest best. To this day I praise at least two of your books as masterpieces, regardless of what anyone says to the contrary. How often you, with the "justification of passion," had mercilessly abused my simplest and strongest feelings before I replied with that one sentence, you forget or pass over in silence. And obviously the sentence in question was not meant in a *purely* personal way any more than the sentences you have uttered. The brother relation lends a personal coloration to everything. But the indulgence you allowed your nerves on Zola and the strain you put on mine—no, I have never allowed myself such indulgence or put upon anyone in such a way. That after the truly French malice, slander, and calumny of this scintillating garble, the very second sentence of which was an inhuman excess, you felt justified in "attempting a reconciliation," though it "seemed hopeless," shows the frivolity of one who has "lifted his heart to the heights." At the time, I might mention, my wife wrote yours a long, tactful and very human letter, and received nothing but insults in return.

It is not true that my attitude during the war was "extreme." Yours was so extreme as to be perfectly nauseating. But I have not suffered and struggled for two years, neglecting my most cherished plans, forcing myself to keep silence as an artist, searching my soul, drawing comparisons and finding myself, in order to throw myself sobbing into your arms on the strength of a letter which—understandably—smacks of triumph, a letter, not a single line of which was dictated by anything other than moral smugness and self-righteousness, in which you see me looking for ultimate arguments at the head of "a few despairing individuals," and finally come to the conclusion that I need not regard you as an enemy. I have been working like a slave; but to this work I owe at least the conviction that to-day I am no longer as helpless against your fanatical attempts at persuasion, as in the days when you could wound me to the quick with them.

You and yours may call me a parasite (*Schmarotzer*). The truth, *my* truth, is that I am not one. Adalbert Stifter, a great socially-minded writer, once said in a letter: "My books are not just literature; as ethical revelations, as human dignity upheld with rigorous seriousness, they have a value which will survive longer than their poetic value." I have a right to say the same, and thousands whom I have helped to live—even without declaiming *Le contrat social* with one hand on my heart and the other in the air—*see* that I have this right.

THESE *letters have been translated from the German by Ralph Mannheim.*

[1] Heinrich Mann (1871–1950), Thomas Mann's older brother, a famous novelist (*Professor Unrat, Der Unkla; Henry IV*) in his own right, with whom relations over a long lifetime were complicated and often stormy. In California during World War II, they were friendly neighbours-in-exile. During World War I, Heinrich belonged to the extreme pacifist left, which (among other things) was a source of the tension documented in this letter.

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But not you. You are unable to see the right and ethos of my life, because you are my brother. Why did no one, neither Hauptmann nor Dehmel, who went so far as to write poems in honour of German horses, nor Harden, the prophet of preventive war (on whom you now pay calls of homage), find it necessary to connect the invectives of your Zola article with himself? Why was this whole shattering polemic directed against me? The brother relation compelled you to write it that way. To the same Dehmel, your first-night crony, who from the trenches sent me thanks and congratulations for my first articles on the war in *Die Neue Rundschau*, you are able to offer your warmest sympathies and he is able to accept them; for though you are men of very different mind, you are not brothers, and for that reason there is room in the world for both of you.—Let the tragedy of our brotherhood complete itself.

Am I unhappy about it? Not so very. One's sensibilities grow blunted. Since Carla killed herself and you broke with Lula [a Mann sister] for life, parting for all eternity is nothing new in our circle. I did not ask for such a life. I detest it. One must live out one's life as best one can.

Farewell.

T.

Munich, January 6, 1925

Dear Herr Eulenberg[2]*:*

What are you planning to do: write about the Peeperkorn case? Make a great stir about it? Shove it down the throats of the public? Provoke a scandal? Whom do you expect to benefit by it? Hauptmann? Impossible. The public? But you will only be giving it an empty, revolting sensation, and I should be driven to defend myself with indignation against the allegation that I had portrayed G. Hauptmann in the figure of the Dutchman. It is not true. But having made that clear, I will tell you the whole truth. A year ago last fall, when the character was taking form, I was in Bozen, where I felt the impact of Hauptmann's powerful and moving personality. The experience was reflected in certain of Peeperkorn's external traits. This I cannot and will not deny. But I shall not go one step further in my admissions. Apart from these superficial traits, what could Hauptmann possibly have in common with the former coffee-merchant from Java, who comes to Davos with his malaria and his adventurous mistress and, by way of abdication, kills himself with Asiatic drugs? Nothing whatever, and if those who know Hauptmann are struck by certain resemblances at the beginning of the episode, they are sure to forget about them as they go on reading. So far perhaps 50,000 persons have read the book. Of these, two dozen at most, because they shared this selfsame experience with me, are in a position to see resemblances. The rest are as unsuspecting as they should be. And you want to enlighten them? I ask you cordially and earnestly to do nothing of the sort.

Recently I read the first part of the Peeperkorn episode aloud in Stuttgart as I had previously done in other cities. Hauptmann himself had given a lecture there a few days before. Not one of the people who had met with the great man socially after his lecture (not to mention the rest of the audience) so much as flicked an eyelash—obviously no one had been struck by any resemblance. Friends of Hauptmann—Loerke, Reisiger, and his "Eckermann," Chapiro, who wrote an almost fulsome review of *The Magic Mountain*, Dr. Eloesser, to whom I also owe an extremely favourable review, accepted the figure, perhaps with a note of recognition, but without the slightest misgiving. Wasserman, who also knows Hauptmann, wrote me on the subject: "When at last the discursive voices of your orchestra produce a figure such as Peeperkorn (a figure admirably seen and admirably drawn), we are face to face with the irrational and with a great creation of the fantasy"—yes, it is just that, a product of fantasy, coloured, involuntarily and half-unconsciously, by a powerful experience of reality. In its idea and essential traits—as a contrast to the "little babblers" who are dwarfed by Peeperkorn—the character of course had been conceived long before I met Hauptmann and merely owes a few living features to the impression he made on me during our two weeks together. And from this it is inferred that I have penned an insulting caricature of Germany's foremost writer? Are you as a poet, is G. H. not familiar with the phenomenon

[2] Herbert Eulenberg, a Berlin playwright and novelist, who was about to write an embarrassing (for Thomas Mann) commentary on *Der Zauberberg* (The Magic Mountain) which had just been published. Mann's confession of his "sins" occurs in a letter several months later to "The Master" (Gerhart Hauptmann), printed below.

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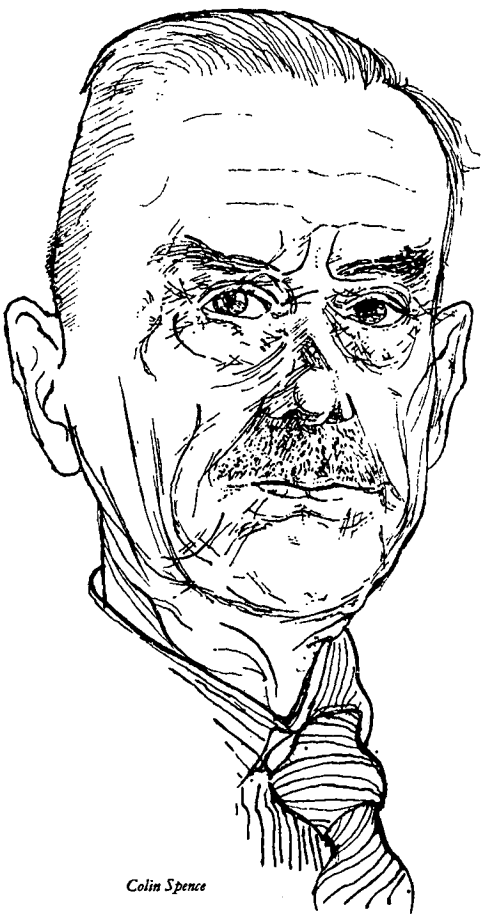
I have described? Michael Kramer, I am told, was a living man. *Kollege* Crampton, the drunkard, was definitely a living man. The story of Gabriel Schilling was a "true" story. [Three dramas by Hauptmann.] But Pieter Peeperkorn's story is *not* a true story; it merely borrowed a few wrinkles from reality.

It is superfluous to point out that none of the numerous reviews contains the slightest intimation of a connection. For reasons of indiscretion? No, because their authors suspected no such connection, and to disturb this state of innocence would be harmful in every respect. But it may not be entirely superfluous to observe that in every single review I have read and in every letter I have received, this Peeperkorn is said to be the most successful and winning character in the book next to Joachim Ziemssen. "He, Peeperkorn," Wassermann says, "has your secret love." *Ihre heimliche Liebe!* I did not think it to be so secret. And now I am expected to defend myself against the suspicion of cold betrayal.



Colin Spence

Believe me, *lieber Herr* Eulenberg, it would be a severe blow to me in a purely human sense if the idea of a betrayal, of malignant spying, of impious exploitation—a seed planted by others, as I am forced to suspect—should take root in Hauptman's heart. In any case, that would be an affair between him and me—and not a hopeless one, I venture to believe: his greatness, kindness, and serenity encourage me to rely on his understanding. But for heaven's sake, I beg you once again, don't "write" about it. Write him, write me, whatever your heart dictates. But don't spoil everything by taking the affair before a public which, you must know as well as I, is not capable of understanding it and is not worthy of it!

Yours,

THOMAS MANN

Poschingerstrasse 1, Munich
January 21, 1925

Dear Ponten[3]*:*

Thank you for your letter which I read attentively and for sending me Binding's excellent reportage. I believe I should have been as moved as he was by the memorial services for those fine youngsters. If it is true that I have aroused your antipathy, that is sad for both of us. But for that very reason, I feel sure that this state of affairs cannot be lasting.

I must reject your proposals. I feel no need to make any conciliatory statements in the hope of healing the breach which you have evidently found it necessary to open between us. If you believe that *The Magic Mountain* has in some way confirmed your views, if you are under the impression that statements of yours have been distorted and misused, it is up to you to explain your position. I have nothing to say, not publicly at least. Anyone who has read the *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man* knows that your polemic could contain no crushing revelations for me. And anyone who is familiar with the musical dialectic of *The Magic Mountain* knows in addition that I am perfectly capable of answering you. Anyone with a grain of sense understands why in the controversy over "spirit" and "nature" (*Geist und Natur*)—to carry on with the terminology you have taken over from our conversation—I find it advisable to-day to speak out in favour of the "spirit" and am not

[3]Josef Ponten, a German novelist, who had just published a sharp attack in the *Deutsche Rundschau* in the form of an "Open Letter to Thomas Mann."

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in the least bit worried lest "nature," which has always been preponderant in this Germany of ours, should find itself outweighed. Even if you have shown the extent of your friendship by mobilising the nationalist youth against me, I happen to know that even the new novel has aroused, in quite a few young people, a sense of shame and a desire to tender me an apology. Besides, I am so accustomed to being seen in a false light, opinions concerning me have changed so often, that I have renounced the thankless and undignified task of justifying and explaining myself, and resolved to leave all that to time and the normal influence of my work.

This, I believe, answers your letter. But for fear of seeming smug, I shall go a little further.

Do you know the beautiful and powerful words that Varnhagen von Ense wrote in 1813 when Goethe succeeded in passing for a man without a country? Whether they are known to you or not, I shall quote them here. "Goethe not a German patriot?" cried Varnhagen. "All the freedom of *Germanien* was concentrated in his heart at an early age and—a benefit to us all that can never be sufficiently appreciated—became the model, the paradigm, the trunk of our education. We all of us live in the shade of that tree. Never have roots sunk so firmly and deeply into the soil of our fatherland, never have arteries drawn so fully and unceasingly from its pithy core. Our embattled younger generation and its lofty spirit are indeed more profoundly indebted to this man than to a good many others who claim to have been eminently active in this direction."

Beautiful, powerful words. They point to the truth which I am glad to uphold publicly, namely that in matters of patriotism what a man says and thinks is not very important, but that what he does is all-important. A man who has written *Goetz, Faust, Sprüche in Reimen, Hermann und Dorothea*, a poem which Schlegel honoured with the epithet "patriotic," can be as humanistic as he pleases, he can afford to display the attitude of a devotee of unreliable cosmopolitan civilisation: he is and remains a product of what is great in the German spirit. If a man—forgive me for mentioning myself in the same breath; I should only do so in a personal letter—has written *Buddenbrooks* and *Tonio Kröger* in his youth and in his mature years *The Magic Mountain*, a book which is conceivable only in Germany and could not possibly be more German—that man is authentic enough and possesses sufficient national "nature" to permit himself, in a precise, carefully considered and good intention, to defend the "spirit" a little without being accused of literary nihilism, and perhaps our amiable young Rhön people have more in common with his spirit than to-day, in their indignation, they imagine.

Let us go back to Goethe for a moment. You know that the old humanist detested "the Cross." And yet he often and explicitly expressed his veneration of the Christian ideal. "The human spirit," he said, "will never surpass the sublimity and *ethical culture* of Christianity as it shines and sparkles in the Gospels." Such words suggest a sympathy, a feeling of *community*, that are worth thinking about. Goethe bows to the "ethical culture" of Christianity, that is, its humanity, its civilising anti-barbaric tendency. It was his own; and such occasional homages spring no doubt from an insight into the kinship between the mission of Christianity in the *völkisch-germanischen welt* (which, between you and me, is still only three steps removed from barbarism, when not in the very midst of it) and his own. Therein, in the fact that he saw his own task, his national calling, as essentially one of civilising, lies the deepest and most German significance of his "renunciation." For can you doubt that Goethe possessed within him the seeds of another greatness, wilder, more violent, more dangerous, more "natural" than that which his instinct of self-discipline permitted him to unfold, than the greatness of the teacher and guide who stands before us to-day. In his *Iphigenie* the idea of humanity as the antithesis to barbarism takes on the imprint of civilisation, not in the polemical and already political sense in which the word is commonly used to-day, but in the sense of "ethical culture." It was a Frenchman, Maurice Barrès, who called *Iphigenie* "a civilising work." The epithet applies almost more intimately to another work of self-restraint and discipline, one might even say, of self-castigation, which, because of its courtly, rather precious atmosphere, many of us like to disparage, namely *Tasso*. These are works of "renunciation," works in which a German educator renounces the benefits of barbarism—benefits from which the voluptuary Richard Wagner derived such enormous effects but for which he paid the inevitable penalty, to wit, the steadily increasing uncouthness of the audiences to which his ethnological debauches appeal. In this matter a law is indeed operative. For is the pedagogic duty of renunciation to which Goethe

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inclined not something more than personal? Is it not the decree of fate, the inborn imperative, which cannot be transgressed on pain of grave spiritual punishment, that has lived in all Germans who have ever developed the slightest responsibility for the education of their people?

These are important trends, *lieber Herr* Ponten, which to-day are not unrelated to the problem of Germany's reconciliation with Europe and in general with the salvation of Europe. You have blundered guilelessly into all this, but I should like you to know that a good many people do not regard your statement as the least bit guileless and cannot forgive me for the *bonhomie* with which I have taken it. I think they are mistaken. But now that I have alienated our fine young people, I cannot proceed to alienate my friends by turning out pamphlets in collaboration with you. Sooner or later I must find a way of "reaching the youth" by my own devices, and it seems to me that you too should prefer to reach them in a different way than by writing polemics against me, namely through your work.

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

Munich,
Poschingerstrasse 1,
April 11, 1925

Dear, great, and revered Gerhart Hauptmann[4]:

Permit me at last to write you. I have long wished to do so but did not dare to. I have a bad conscience, I have sinned. I say "sinned," because the word has a twofold dynamic: it is strong and solemn as it should be, and yet again, in a certain usage, it is a half-way good-natured, familiar, would-be humorous word, that is not applicable to really vile actions. I may say that I have sinned as children sin. For believe me (you do believe me, I think): I have much more of the child artist in me than is suspected by those who babble about my "intellectualism"; and since you too are a *Künstlerkind*, a sublime understanding and indulgent child of art, I hope with these lines, however inadequate they may prove to be, to gain your *full* forgiveness, for permit me to believe that I have been half forgiven all along.

I have offended against you. I was in need, I was led into temptation and ceded to the temptation. The need was artistic: I was looking for a figure who was necessary, whose place in the composition had been thought out long before, but whom I did not see or hear or possess. Anxiously searching, I went to Bozen, and there, as we sat sipping our wine, I was taken unawares—there appeared before me a gift which from a human and personal point of view I should never have accepted, but which, in a state of attenuated human responsibility, I did accept and felt entitled to accept, for I was blinded by enthusiasm and by the firm conviction that in my transposition (for it is self-evident that this figure is not a reproduction of the living original but a stylised transposition, dimly related to the reality on the surface but in essence quite foreign to it) the figure would become the most remarkable character in a remarkable book, as I no longer doubt *The Magic Mountain* to be.

I was not under a delusion. I was right. I did wrong but I was right. I am not saying that the end justifies the means. But were these means, was the spirit in which I utilised the human externals base, malicious, loveless, disrespectful? *Lieber, verehrter* Gerhart Hauptmann, it was not. If I have been guilty of a betrayal, it was certainly not a betrayal of my feeling for you, which is clearly and plainly expressed even in my treatment of the essentially fictitious giant, in whose presence the babblers are reduced to dwarfs; nor is there betrayal in the attitude of respect which my young son, Hans Castorp, takes from the very first towards the imposing man who possesses the boy's beloved and supplants her in his affections. No man of feeling can be deceived on this score by the, let us say, ironic and grotesque artifices that I habitually employ. Not to mention what you already know: that except for those who know you intimately no one "notices anything"; in a word, that the matter is not public. This does not discharge me of responsibility. I have always known and said that it is an affair between you and me. But what of your closest friends, disciples, and admirers, Reisiger, Chapiro, Loerke, Heimann, Eulenberg, who were in a position to "notice" something and did—are they insulted by the figure? Have they taken offence, have they manifested indignation? No, they have not.

[4] *Gerhart Hauptmann* (1862–1946), the greatest modern German dramatist, Nobel prize-winner (1912), was a friend of Thomas Mann but had taken umbrage at the "caricature" of himself which had formed the basis of the "Mynheer Peeperkorn" figure in *The Magic Mountain*.

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Some of them have done the very opposite. This strikes me as significant. Perhaps if you thought it over, you would not be so angry with me.

Lieber, verehrter Hauptmann! Ought you, because of one misdeed, one artist's failing, forget everything I have said about you when I was writing really about you and not about a grandiose mask? The article, for example, which won me your friendship and in which I called you *den König des Volkes*? May I remind you of it in my distress? And I do wish your wife, who is still more severe with me, might also be reminded of that. So confident am I of your own forgiveness that I shall even venture to ask you to put in a good word for me with her.

Rest assured that I shall make no immoderate demands on your kindness if life should bring us together—as seems likely. I am aware that my misdeed—for a time at least—has made impossible certain things which might otherwise have been. But when the time comes, I beg you, do not deny me your hand, which I venture to shake in spirit with all the true feeling which I have never, at any moment of my life or work, in your company or far away from you, ceased to nurture for you.

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

Arosa, Switzerland,
May 25, 1926

Dear Herr Fischer[5]*:*

I am ashamed not to have written sooner to thank you for your interesting letter, all the more so as I am still in no position to thank you properly by answering it at length. My stay here, occasioned by the illness of one of my dear ones, has been taken up with chores of the kind that a merciless world never ceases to heap on one who has been so foolish as to make his conscience public and so foster the delusion that he is a born preceptor. And now I shall soon be leaving, first for Zürich, then for Lübeck and Hamburg, and so I cannot answer your letter as it deserves, but unless I do my best right now, weeks will go by before I am able to tell you how moved I am by the personal questions raised in your letter.

In a sense it challenges me to justify and excuse what I have done, but I have no desire—or courage, if you will—to do that. I might say that *The Magic Mountain* is definitely and explicitly a historical novel, that it takes place before the war in an essentially esthetic and estheticist epoch, for which the alternative of "art or socialism" was not, or did not seem to be, nearly as sharp as to-day; that this epoch of pre-war capitalism is reflected symbolically in the figures and images of *The Magic Mountain*, and that the book is not lacking in socialist ideas or moral condemnation of a world that was destined to vanish in the war years. But I should regard such arguments as evasions. Ultimately not the novel is historical, but myself. The roots of my culture are the same as those indicated by Goethe in his autobiographical works: romantic aspirations and a sense of civic responsibility (*im Bürgerlichen, in der Romantik*). A man of your insight cannot for one moment fail to see that *Tonio Kröger* (a work of my youth), *Death in Venice*, and *The Magic Mountain* are eminently Romantic conceptions. Wagner was my strongest and most decisive artistic experience. To these, indeed, I must add an element which in a sense is my bond with the modern world and without which I could not write as I do to-day: my experience of the self-conquest of Romanticism in Nietszche. What you find intriguing (in the pejorative sense) in my works is my irony, the weakening of the basic instincts through criticism. *The Magic Mountain* is a perfectly genuine expression of my being, particularly insofar as it represents a parodied conservatism with the help of which I, in my work, maintain a balance between the epochs. The very idea of renewing the German *Bildungsroman* by taking tuberculosis as the central theme of my novel is a parody. I believe that the crisis of art, as form or even as idea, a crisis of which you speak so well in your letter, finds its expression in my books. And to tell the truth, that is enough for me. I do not think an artist is under obligation to know everything or to solve problems, to be a teacher or a leader. I have already said that a writer is sometimes forced into this role and must then perform it to the best of his ability. But his vocation, his nature, is not to teach, to judge, or to show the way; it is to communicate being and action, to express psychic situations. Therein alone is he "significant," a word which, in connection with art and artists, can have no other meaning.

I hope I have answered you in some measure. Many thanks for your thoughtful interest in a

[5] Ernst Fischer (1899–), well-known Viennese Marxist writer.

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work whose problematic nature the author would be the last to deny.

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

Poschingerstrasse 1, Munich,
June 6, 1932

My dear Herr Perl[6]*:*

I was glad to read your article, but it does not add up to much. It is small comfort to learn that the nationalist International is everywhere full of fine clean young people, if these young people fail to realise that the national ideal has its heroic age behind it, that nationalism exhausted itself and fulfilled all its potentialities in the nineteenth century, and is no more to-day than an ugly mass passion, a barrier to world progress and a blight on our lives. Goethe wrote in 1798: "Patriotism conceived as personal bravery has outlived itself just as much as clericalism and aristocratism." In those days it took a great man to see that. To-day it is not nearly so difficult, but your good clean young people fail to see it—whence one can only infer that goodness and cleanness are not enough. Nor do they see that to-day all the forces of brutality and reaction, all the anti-intellectual and anti-cultural forces of the past, are allied with the "national ideal." They think of themselves as "oriented toward the future," courageous, revolutionary. A sad misunderstanding—that is what an article such as yours should have pointed out.

It should also have dealt with the tragedy of such a people as the Germans, who have it in them to take the lead, to guide the whole world, but to-day aspire to nothing but restoration. Their eyes are turned backwards at a past which cannot help them; and one is filled with horror at the defeats which await them and which, it goes without saying, will involve disastrous internal struggles.

To-day the patriotic reaction is on its way to total victory. We shall see what it will make of Germany at home, which is what they are chiefly if not exclusively concerned with—and in its dealing with foreign countries. Let them get their belly full. Then at least it will become clear where the "opposition" is, and what really takes courage and honour to-day.

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

Nidden, Kurische Nehrung,
Haus Thomas Mann,
July 30, 1932

Dear Count Keyserling[7]*:*

Your article was sadly delayed in forwarding and I read it the moment it arrived. It gave me, in full measure, the satisfaction with which, in times like this, something good and right requites us for the bitter taste of so much evil and wrong-headedness. I only regret that my young people are not here: they would have been grateful readers, as I hope they soon will be.

It has certainly never been truer than to-day that people begin to err the moment they open their mouths. I myself am haunted by this truth, and it is only in the most general terms that I am willing to defend the public statements I have made on these questions in moments of urgency. Even in connection with your remarks, a question mark might here and there be in order. For instance, I cannot quite agree that the nineteenth century was so very unfavourable to the Germans, offering them no opportunity to be themselves—for several decades of this century, after all, they wielded an authentic and legitimate hegemony over Europe, so much so that Renan exclaimed: "There's no denying it, the Germans are a superior race!" To-day, unfortunately, we do not have this impression, persuasive as your arguments seem to the effect that the world hour of the Germans has struck. Oh, that could be and ought to be true. In the last fourteen years Germany might have accumulated an enormous moral prestige if it had consciously and resolutely, as a social republic of peace, taken the lead, resolved to guide our continent toward a new and better age. The Germans could not make up their minds. Their panic fear of the nationalist notables was too strong; each day they capitulated anew and to-day we see them engaged in the crudest nationalistic mischief, without feeling for the fact that God is nauseated by the obsolete which He desires to transcend with us and actually transcended long ago in spirit. You are an indulgent prophet. I myself am more worried about this important nation, which is behaving in a manner beneath

[6] An American professor who had published studies on Thomas Mann's work.

[7] Herman Graf Keyserling (1880–1946), philosopher and educator (founder of "The School of Wisdom," in Darmstadt).

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its station and showing so little awareness of the fact that along with France it bears the responsibility for this continent and for far more.

This does not prevent your article, in the main, from being the best and soundest statement of what can be said on these burning questions. Especially what you say about and against so-called National Socialism hits the mark exactly, to my mind. Germany, reduced to these simpletons' image of her! What an absurdity! How preposterous and impossible! You are very much to be thanked for showing just this and, though you do so in philosophical words, free from emotional charge, for opposing the richness, variety, and universality of the German spirit to the infantile brutality that threatens us. And what is the German feeling for tolerance and fair compromise which you praise, if not—democratic feeling? Can it be that the Germans only imagine their hostility to democracy?

No, I have not missed your *South American Meditations*, and though I have no wish to disparage the celebrated travel journal, I am glad that you yourself set the latest book on a higher plane. It is certainly your most colourful, most lively, and most poetic work. Your prose often smacked of the professional philosopher; with its use of *"nun"* and *"denn,"* the flow was purely logical rather than musical. Even Schopenhauer wrote more musically, and it was vexing to see that Spengler, that detestable parodist of Nietzsche, could outdo you in style. But it seems to me that the picture has been completely changed by the *Meditations*, which show a stirring artistic impulse.

Your devoted,
THOMAS MANN

Bandol (Var), May 15, 1933
Grand Hotel

Dear Professor Einstein[8]*:*

If I have delayed thanking you for your kind letter until to-day, my repeated movings have been to blame.

No greater honour has been shown me in these last wretched months or perhaps in my whole life; still, you praise me for an action that was natural to me and hence hardly deserving of praise. On the other hand, the position in which my action has put me is not natural at all; for at heart I am far too good a German to take the thought of lasting exile lightly, and the thought of the breach with my country that has become almost inevitable, oppresses and frightens me deeply—a sign that such a breach does not really suit my nature in which the tradition represented by Goethe plays a far greater part than any true vocation for martyrdom. Something truly wrong and evil had to happen to force me into this role, and it is my profound conviction that this whole "German Revolution" is indeed wrong and evil. It lacks all the qualities which have won the sympathy of the world for true revolutions, however bloody. It is *not* essentially an "awakening," whatever its proponents may say and shout, but hate, revenge, common homicidal mania, and petit-bourgeois meanness. I am convinced that nothing good can come of it, either for Germany or the rest of the world, and to have done our utmost to warn the world against the forces that have brought on this moral and cultural misery that may be our own ruin, will some day surely be a title of honour.

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

Küsnacht-Zürich, January 8, 1934

Dear René Schickele[9]*:*

Poor Wassermann looked so badly when we met here three weeks ago at the Baur au Lac on his return from his insane trip to Holland, that we did not give him six months to live. And now it has happened even more quickly—he died of a heart attack early New Year's morning.

He had had diabetes for years, and sufferers from this disease cannot bear excitement. But he lived in a state of permanent excitement: the quarrels with his first wife... and his experience in Germany aggravated a disease with which, under favourable circumstances, one can live to a ripe old age. His heart was under a heavy strain. Last fall he was in the Vienna Hospital with a bad attack of so-called angina pectoris; then for need of money he went to Holland where, to save the expense of a hotel room, he lived in an unheated private garage

[8] Albert Einstein (1879–1955), Nobel prize-winning physicist (1921), who emigrated from Nazi Germany in 1933 on the coming to power of Hitler.

[9] René Schickele (1883–1940), an Alsatian writer who was half-French, half-German, and died (in exile) in France. Jakob Wassermann (1873–1934), was the author of *Caspar Hauser*, *Der Fall Maurizius*, and other novels.

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and further impaired his health. One cannot help thinking that his heart attack saved him from complete ruin at the last moment.... What a sad end after his brilliant rise from poverty and obscurity.

Because of a certain empty glitter and wordy sententiousness, his work often forced a smile from me, although I was well aware that he was a more gifted story-teller than I. I also saw his holy earnestness and his vision of a great work. What struck me as "visionary" was not the work itself, but his passionate wishful image of it, his will—and I valued his personal friendship. Though I did not quite realise it at first, the news of his death was an enormous shock to me, from which I have not yet recovered: my nerves and stomach failed me, I was obliged to stay in bed for several days. No doubt the reaction in Germany had something to do with it. The *Berliner Börsencourier* wrote: "W. was one of the most prominent writers of November Germany. He had virtually no connection with German literature." Isn't this stinking idiocy enough to send you to your grave? Have a look at it: That is the German obituary for all of us....

Your picture postcard made me homesick for Sanary and my little stone terrace where I used to sit every evening, looking after shooting stars, that too is long past. It will not be long until the anniversary of my departure from Munich (February 12). My God, how strange it is.

Cordially,
THOMAS MANN

Küsnacht, Zürich,
May 23, 1935

Dear Madame Servicen[10]*:*

I am sorry to be late in answering your letter of the 16th, which reached me while I was still in Nice; during my stay there, many personal obligations compelled me to neglect my correspondence. I very much hope that the following notes do not reach you too late.

It was in Nice that I received the first copies of *Histoires de Jacob*; since then I have carefully examined the translation, which has left me with an excellent impression. Unless I am very much mistaken, you have performed a difficult task with extraordinary sensibility and success. Permit me to hope that the French public will give you the thanks you deserve. I personally, in any event, am sincerely grateful to you for the devotion—I am well able to measure it—that you have given to this complex and exacting undertaking. As a meagre token of my appreciation I am taking the liberty of sending you a photograph of myself, with the request that you keep it in memory of your beautiful and helpful work on my books.

I am pleased to learn of Maurice Noël's intention of writing a study on the novel for *Le Figaro*. You tell me that he would like a few notes from me on the genesis and aims of the book. I shall have to be brief, for even a relatively full account of the inner conditions that gave rise to such a work would lead me far and take up considerable space and time. It is a strange conception, in which a variety of tendencies and moods converged. Purely in respect of the material, its roots go far back, for I recall that even as a boy I had a decided interest in the life of the ancient Orient, especially of Egypt, and read books on the subject. My interest in the history and psychology of religions, which was one of the sources of the undertaking, came to me much later—I was far from such thoughts in my younger days. Altogether, I entered upon a new stage in my literary life with this novel, in which, at least for the time being, I turned away from man as a social individual to concern myself with the *typical* and *mythical*. An insight into the identity of these two notions, the typical and the mythical, is indeed the foundation of the whole work. And a related sense of *human destiny* was one of the sources of my pleasure in this far-flung narrative. Essentially, we have here again, as in *Buddenbrooks*, the story of a family's development, and in a sense also a story of cultivation and decadence—for the young Joseph, an *artistic* nature living in a religious environment, takes approximately the same attitude towards his fathers as Hanno Buddenbrook towards his, except that, as I have said, in this mythical book the familiar social circumstances give way to the typically-human, so that the book aspires, in a measure, to be a *brief history of mankind*. Such intentions are suggested in the long introduction, entitled "Journey to Hell," which precedes the first volume but is intended, it goes without saying, not only for this volume but for the whole as well.

The *sense of human destiny* of which I spoke enters into the book in still another way. It

[10] Louise Servicen, the French translator of Thomas Mann's works.

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seems to me that the deeply disturbing experience, which at least Western man has incurred in the last decades, has given rise to a wholly new interest in the destiny of man, his origin, his position in the cosmos, and his future. In this *human interest*, as one might call it, I do not feel alone; beyond any doubt it is alive to-day in many minds and it was at work within me as I conceived this book. If this strongly individual work meets with sympathy, I attribute the fact to such an encounter of feeling between myself and those of my contemporaries who have gone through the same experience.

With these remarks I believe I have indicated the essential motives that inspired and are continuing to inspire the work. I shall be glad if I have provided the critic for *Le Figaro* with a little useful psychological material. Please remember me to M. Noël and tell him how much I appreciate his interest.

I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting you personally in Paris before too long. With cordial greetings, I remain,

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

Küsnacht, November 29, 1935

Dear Dr. Korrodi[11]*:*

Many thanks for your letter which I found waiting for me here yesterday on my return from the French breakfast. I don't think you have ever written me such a long one.

I was delighted to see that you felt as you did about our meeting at the *Zimmerleuten* [Restaurant], for my feelings were identical. That was a significant constellation at our table, rich in implications and memories. It "meant something" that we should all have been sitting there together on your "big night," and I always have a feeling for such situations. I am especially glad to have acquitted myself of the task I had so boldly usurped, for I hear that in Germany no attempt was made to celebrate the occasion. Is it not a sign, and a very glaring one, of the state of affairs there? For it cannot be denied that you have always "meddled" in German affairs in a way very deserving of thanks. ... But if anyone were to find fault with the Germans on this score, they would be quite capable of answering: "I beg your pardon, Thomas Mann spoke, didn't he?" That is how they are. They even send Lehwald, a half-Jew, to Zürich to deliver a highly humanitarian propaganda speech for the Olympic Games, dripping with brotherhood among nations, human dignity, *Seid umschlungen Millionen*, and so on—all in the name of the Third Reich. That is how they are. They are the most dishonourable swine that God ever created. Don't mistake my words for the ravings of a refugee. It's the plain truth.

Your request, my good friend, was met before you uttered it. How can you expect me to join in any action against little Kesser's criticism, or even suppose that anyone would approach me with such a proposal? What has got into you? First of all, the review itself is an *internum helveticum*, and Switzerland can rely on my respect for taboos. True, the case is somewhat complicated by the fact that the author himself is a refugee; at home this compatriot of mine was far to the left, with the Communists in all likelihood, which now entitles him to write about serious literature for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*—well, I shall show him what I think by not seeing him any more. Apart from the main argument, I found his way of dissociating himself from his companions in fate presumptuous to say the least. The German emigration, only a small percentage of which Switzerland has had to put up with after all, is far too heterogeneous in ideology, talent, and human weight to be judged in the lump. Still, its members have one common bond, namely that all are victims of the National Socialist régime (an honour which perhaps all its individuals do not deserve), and that too is for me a kind of taboo, which I respect, and I do not quite understand the note of harshness or, one might even say, disgust, that is unmistakably evident in the judgment, or is it feeling, that you express about this section of humanity: "A man at odds with his government is a figure who fills the pure of heart with horror"—is there not in such an utterance a certain smallness that one should try to correct? For of what government are we speaking? The words "political refugee" were a mark of honour in times when there was not half so much moral justification for so considering them as there is to-day. What is the world coming to!

You will answer that *I* have nothing to complain about. No, indeed. I personally have every reason to be thankful for the kindness I have met with, and will assuredly do nothing to for-

[11] Edward Korrodi (1885–1955), Swiss literary critic, who was for many years the *feuilleton* editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

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feit it. I do not behave like a man who has lost his dignity; but I also know that people who do not lose their dignity in the presence of certain things have none to lose, and I wonder whether the fact that I too, even I, am a refugee ought not to give the world food for thought.

The French have every reason to keep cool about events in Germany, for France is by no means free from responsibility for the turn things have taken. If in addition a Frenchman has Fascist leanings, it becomes still easier for him to keep his composure and to be repelled by the desperate hatred shown by refugees. In general, an attitude of phlegmatic fairness is very much favoured by an inability to understand what is happening to human beings and to humanity in Germany to-day. It is a remarkable phenomenon which I have often observed: even those who disapprove do not understand; they remain benignly calm, because they lack direct experience. And it is almost impossible to communicate such experience in words. It goes far beyond the political aspect. Fascism, mob rule, dictatorship, do not begin to describe the incomparable horror of what is going on. Perhaps the English bishop who recently said that he grew "blind with rage" when he thought of Germany had some idea. Blind with rage! And he was not a refugee. So perhaps you will forgive him his excess. He is a good man. As part of the programme organised by my daughter in Zürich a beautiful song was sung. "Partake of their suffering," it said. I was deeply moved at this attempt to combat the coldness and insensibility of the world, and so were some others at the time.

Now I have written you a letter even longer than yours. Forgive me, it just ran off my pen. Better not publish it right away; wait until after my death.

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

Küsnacht-Zürich, November 3, 1936

Dear Dr. Korrodi[12]*:*

Your article, "German Literature and the Refugees," which appeared in the second Sunday edition of the *N.Z.Z.* for January 26, has been much read, much discussed, and much quoted, not to say exploited, by the press of various tendencies. Moreover, it was related, if only loosely, to a statement which I, in league with a few friends, felt called upon to make on behalf of our old literary home, the S. Fischer Verlag. May I, therefore, make a few remarks and perhaps even give vent to a few misgivings?

You are right: it was definitely a polemicist's blunder on the part of the editor of the *Neues Tage-Buch* to claim that the entire, or almost the entire, literary world had left Germany or, as he put it, "been transferred abroad." I understand perfectly that an untenable exaggeration of this kind was bound to make a neutral like you take up arms. Leopold Schwarzschild is a brilliant political publicist, a good hater, a forceful stylist; but literature is not his field and I presume that he—rightly so, perhaps—regards political struggle under the present circumstances as far more important, rewarding, and decisive than literature. Be that as it may, the lack of perspective and artistic fairness disclosed by his assertion could not fail to arouse the antagonism of a literary critic like yourself, and some of the names you mention, of authors who have remained in Germany, refute his thesis beyond question.

It might be asked, however, whether certain of these men would not prefer to be outside if it were feasible. I do not wish to call anyone to the attention of the Gestapo, but in many cases the determining motives may well be less spiritual than purely mechanical, so that a dividing line between refugee and non-refugee German literature is not so easily drawn: spiritually speaking, it does not absolutely coincide with the frontiers of the Reich. The German writers who live outside the Reich should not, I think, look with promiscuous contempt on those who wished, or were obliged, to stay at home, and not let their artistic judgment hinge on "inside" or "outside." They have suffered; but so have those at home, and the refugees should be on their guard against the self-righteousness that is so often a product of suffering. For example, they should not be in such a hurry to raise cries of traitor and renegade against those fellow-writers who, to be sure, for the sake of their European attitude and conception of *Deutschtum*, have abandoned home and fortune and honorific positions; who have rejected all heavy-handed hints that the new Germany might make good use of them and would treat them with indulgence in view of their unaccountable but undeniable world prestige,

[12] This was an "Open Letter" and was published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. It led to the *"Ausbürgerung,"* the taking away of Thomas Mann's German citizenship by Hitler.

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and stayed where they were, preferring to await the heyday and collapse of the Third Reich in freedom, but wished in no event, whether they supposed that the present German régime would endure or expected it to pass away, to burn the bridges between themselves and their country and deprive themselves of all possibility of influence there; the writers of the emigration, I say, should not be in such a hurry to attack such a man the moment he, perhaps for good reasons which they do not wholly understand, disagrees with them in questions concerning the "re-settlement of German culture."

Enough of that. The identification of refugee literature with German literature is impossible if only because the latter includes Austrian and Swiss literature. I personally hold two living authors in the German language in particular esteem: Hermann Hesse and Franz Werfel, both of them novelists and at the same time admirable poets. They are not refugees because one of them is Swiss, the other a Bohemian Jew. But neutrality is a difficult art, even for those whose history has given them as long practice of it as you Swiss. How easily a neutral, in combating one injustice, falls into another. You protest against the identification of refugee literature with German literature, and a moment later you yourself utter an equally untenable equation; for strange to say, what angers you is not the mistake, but the fact that it is made by a Jewish writer; and in inferring from this that once again, in confirmation of an old patriotic complaint, literature of Jewish origin has been confused with German literature, you yourself confuse refugee literature with Jewish literature.

Have I any need to say that this cannot be done? My brother Heinrich and I are not Jews. Leonhard Frank, René Schickele, the soldier Fritz von Unruh, a man as firmly rooted in the Bavarian soil as Oskar Maria Graf, Annette Kolb, A. M. Frey, and among the younger writers, such men as Gustav Regler, Bernard von Brentano, and Ernst Glaeser—there is not a single Jew among them. That in the emigration as a whole the Jews are heavily represented is only natural: it follows from the lofty cruelty of the National Socialist racial philosophy and, seen from another angle, from the fact that certain political institutions of our day are a source of particular horror to the Jewish mind and to Jewish morality. But my list, which lays no more claim to completeness than your list of writers who have remained in Germany, and which I should never have drawn up of my own accord, shows that there is no justification for terming the literary emigration Jewish or even predominantly so.

I add the names of Bert Brecht and Johannes R. Becher, who are lyric poets, because you say that you know of no single German poet who has emigrated. How can you say such things when I happen to know that you revere Else Lasker-Schüler as a true poetess? Those who have emigrated, you say, are chiefly the *Romanindustrie* and, in addition, "a few novelists of real creative talent." Well, industry means hard work, and hard work is required of uprooted individuals, barely tolerated by an economically frightened and not very generous world, if they are to make a living; it seems rather unfeeling to find fault with them for that. But it is unkind even to ask them whether they imagine that they represent the national wealth of German literature. No, that occurs to none of us, neither the industrialists nor the creators among us. But after all, it is one thing to speak of the historical treasure of German literature, which is dear to us all and which little of what is being written to-day is likely to increase—and another to discuss this present production, carried on by living human beings, which as a whole and in comparison with earlier periods—as everywhere else in the world—shows no extraordinary stature, but in which, again as all over the world, the novel plays a special, in fact a dominant role—a role to which you are not quite fair when you say that not literature but at most prose, that is, the novel, has emigrated. This in itself would not be surprising. Pure poetry—pure in so far as it keeps a safe distance from social and political problems, which lyric poetry has not always done—is subject to other laws than the modern prose epic, the novel, which with its analytical awareness, its inborn critical attitude, is compelled to run away from certain social and political states of affairs, whereas such poetry can flower on the fringes, undisturbed and in serene forgetfulness of the world. But precisely its prosaic quality, namely awareness and criticism, in addition to the richness of its resources, the dynamic freedom with which it mingles creation and inquiry, music and knowledge, myth and science, its human scope, its objectivity and irony, make the novel what it is at the present time: the representative and dominant form of writing. Beside it, drama and poetry are archaic forms. Throughout Europe and in America the novel is the leading literary form. For some time this has also been true in

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Germany, and for this reason, my dear Dr. Korrodi, your remark to the effect that the German novel had emigrated was incautious. If this were so—the assertion is not mine—then, surprisingly enough Schwarzschild, the political writer, would be right and you, the historian of literature, would be wrong, for then indeed the centre of German literary life would have shifted from Germany to foreign countries.

Only recently, in connection with Karl Weiss' biography of Wasserman, you referred, with your customary intuitiveness and subtlety, to the Europeanisation of the German novel. You spoke of the *change* in the type of the German novel brought about by a talent such as Wassermann's and remarked that thanks to the international components of the Jews, the German novel had become international. But my brother and I have contributed no less than Wassermann to this "change" and "internationalisation," and we are not Jews. Perhaps it was the drop of Latin blood (or of Swiss blood from our grandmother) in us, which gave us this capacity. The "international" component of the Jews is their continental European component—which is also German—without it the Germans would not be Germans but an agglomeration of savages, unrelated to the modern world. It is this European component which the Catholic Church, reacting against oppression in a way that has recaptured the veneration of a man as steeped in Protestant culture as myself, defends when it says that the Germans gained admission to the ranks of the leading civilised peoples only with their acceptance of Christianity. A nationalist is not a German. And German anti-Semitism, or rather the anti-Semitism of those who hold power in Germany to-day, is not culturally speaking directed against the Jews or against the Jews alone; it is directed, as becomes clearer each day, against the Christian and classical foundations of Western culture: it is an attempt (symbolised by the German secession from the League of Nations) to shake off the bonds of civilisation, and may well result in a terrible, a disastrous alienation between the land of Goethe and the rest of the world.

A profound conviction, reinforced each day by a thousand human, ethical and aesthetic observations and impressions, that nothing good can possibly come of the present German régime, neither for Germany nor for the world—this conviction has led me to stay away from the country in whose cultural tradition I am more deeply rooted than those who have been asking themselves for the last three years whether they dare to deprive me openly of my German citizenship. And in all conscience I am sure that I have done right by my contemporaries and by posterity in allying myself with those who profess the words of a truly noble German poet:

Doch wer aus voller Seele hasst das Schlechte,
Auch aus der Heimat wird es ihn verjagen,
Wenn dort verehrt es wird vom Volke der Knechte.
Weit klüger ist's, dem Vaterland entsagen,
Als unter einem kindischen Geschlechte
Das Joch des blinden Pöbelhasses tragen.

[PLATEN]

And those who hate evil with all their hearts,
Will be driven from their country
When evil comes to be worshipped by a nation of slaves.
Far wiser to renounce their country
Than to support the yoke of blind mob hatred
Amid a people reverted to infantilism.

Yours,
THOMAS MANN

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Marcus Cunliffe

Life in the Industrial North

or: *A Cold Egg on an Old Tip*

I DO NOT know all the reasons for the recent spread of Welsh and Scottish nationalism. Crudely speaking, they are protests against "colonialism"—against neglect and discrimination, against the mistreatment endured at the hands of the ignorant, supercilious bureaucracy of London and the Home Counties. They are assertions of differentness. But these forms of nationalism are also a way of dealing with, or disguising, the more intractable problem of "provincialism." Colonialism is something done to you, a wrong about which you may properly feel indignant. Provincialism is a more subtle indignity for which it is harder to apportion blame. Provincialism entails the sense of being on the outer, colder, drabber fringes of British life. The provinces have no real definition except in relation to the capital; and if they are industrial provinces their status is lowly indeed. Houses are bought and sold in these places. But you would not guess so by looking through the long columns of property advertisements in the *Sunday Times* and *Observer*. To judge from them, Britain ends to the north somewhere around Warwickshire. This outer, darker region is a source of funny accents, somewhere to get away from, possibly the first chapter but never the final chapter in the autobiographies of the famous. It is dowdy, mediocre, passé, non-U: in a word, provincial. And surely we must admit that Edinburgh and Glasgow, Cardiff and Swansea, as great cities, are not even in the same league as London. What is worse, here is a form of colonialism that instead of diminishing or growing apologetic seems more powerful and more arrogant each year. The financial, cultural and psychological gap widens all the time. What a solace, then, is nationalism! Nationalism enables you to deny that you are in the same league, and to exhibit the dissimilarity in conspicuous ways—wearing the kilt, speaking a separate language. Provinces in a way, yes, the nationalist will say: conquered provinces, provinces in rebellion.

But what if such solace is not available? What if the province in question happens to be not in Scotland or Wales but in Northern England? What reaction, what comfort is possible for those who are inhabitants of Newcastle, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Liverpool, Manchester? Let us take the case of Manchester, because I know it best and because in many ways it is England's second city—the nearest thing to London that the provinces have produced. Also we can conveniently refer to *Manchester And Its Region*, a book just produced for the 1962 meeting of the British Association.* One initial difficulty, which has various implications, is that neither Manchester nor its presumed region have clear boundaries. Manchester is in Lancashire; the main county cricket-ground is there, at Old Trafford; and in some respects Manchester is taken to be representative of Lancashire in that endless mild Lancashire *v.* Yorkshire joking which is a sort of poor man's North Country equivalent to the gentleman's humour of Oxford *v.* Cambridge. More broadly still, Manchester people think of themselves as Northerners, with certain qualities that distinguish them from Southerners. But these allegiances are not tidy or coherent. They have none of the self-righteous fire of nationalist movements, except perhaps when men who have worked in the cotton trade talk about the way the Government has sacrificed them. Manchester lies at the bottom end of Lancashire; a good part of the Manchester region or conurbation is across the county boundary, in Cheshire. Administratively, the city of Manchester is quite small; its population is only 700,000. Over four million people live within twenty miles of the city-centre, in towns and districts such as Salford, Stretford, Sale, Altrincham, Stockport, Hyde, Oldham, Bury and Rochdale. They are emotionally as well as

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administratively separate, though the stranger driving through the continuously built-up streets will hardly be aware of the frontiers. In fact they cling jealousy to their independence. Salford councillors recently complained because, under a Civic Trust scheme, a patch of Salford waste ground had been cleared by schoolboy volunteers—"invaders"—from Manchester. Stretford spokesmen insist that Old Trafford, which is the home of Manchester United football team as well as of the cricket ground, is in their territory. They have exacted a promise from the B.B.C. that its commentators will in future refer to these as "Old Trafford, Stretford." Most people living within twenty miles of Piccadilly, London, would call themselves Londoners, if only for convenience. Many people living within the same radius of Piccadilly, Manchester, would decline to be called Mancunians, for their own or anybody else's convenience.

Let us nevertheless posit the existence of a large area known as Manchester, and expressing some kind of corporate spirit. How does it react to being provincial, and to being notorious among provincial cities for its wretched climate? The commonest response—so habitual that it ought not to be considered as a "response" or "reaction"—is to assert that there is nothing wrong with Manchester. The climate is of course the starting-point. One way of tackling it, as a scholarly author does in *Manchester And Its Region*, is to claim with a straight face and a battery of statistics that the Mancunian climate compares well with that of other places in Britain. Rainfall? Really quite small; a mild, temperate sort of place; hardly any snow to cause a nuisance. Alternatively, Manchester's damp sunless pall is accepted as a joke. It then becomes a lovable feature and even a positive asset, like the alleged deficiencies of the old Model-T Ford. In this affable context of chairmen's introductions and after-dinner speeches, music-hall comedy and civic pride run together. We nod at and applaud familiar anecdotes. I have listened to exactly the same funny stories, told in the United States about Philadelphia. (For example, the story of the competition for which the first prize was a week's holiday in Manchester/Philadelphia, and the second prize a fortnight's holiday there. A more extreme version is the tale of the man who spent a month in Manchester/Philadelphia one Sunday.) But the jokes told in Manchester about Manchester are generally more complacent. The speaker who cites them is likely to modulate into the set-piece encomium which Mancunians know by heart. It includes the enumeration of Manchester's great names in science (Dalton, Joule, Rutherford), with perhaps a reference to the Literary and Philosophical Society (founded in 1781). There is sure to be a paragraph on Manchester culture, with statutory references to the Hallé Orchestra, the Manchester *Guardian*, Miss Annie Horniman's activities in the theatre, the John Rylands Library, and so on. There is bound to be a lot said about Manchester's pioneering spirit, as evidenced by the building of the Ship Canal (completed in the 1890s), and the fact that Manchester was the first city in Britain to talk about smokeless zones. Finally comes the assertion, greeted with gratified applause, that "what Manchester thinks today, the rest of the world thinks tomorrow."

My own reactions, which I think are shared by many people, are different. I find the hoary boast just quoted sickeningly reminiscent of the boast of the Bandar-log, the foolish monkeys in Kipling's *Jungle Book*: "What the Bandar-log think now the Jungle will think tomorrow." I respond to Manchester in what could be called a scab-picking mood—a mixture of shame, complicity, despair, affection, disaffection. It is for me a more intense, more masochistic form of the emotions aroused by a study of Britain's newspapers during a bad week, for the spectacle they appear to provide of mean and stupid legislation, of petty chauvinism, of dowdiness and obsolescence, of incompetence and defeat, of a land without rascality and without ingenuity. Except for social snobbery, which is less malevolent than in the South, Manchester can be seen as a quintessential England, the spot where all the worst features are concentrated in a permanent exhibit.

In this mood, reading about *Manchester And Its Region*, I was antagonised by phrases in the blurb: "... a great centre of human civilisation, the mother of industrial revolutions, ... not living in the past but ... an active participant and protagonist of scientific and industrial advancement." Instead, this sort of quotation, from the chapter on "Fauna," transfixed me:

> The Nightjar has seriously decreased in this area. It used to be common in many places in Cheshire and on the Lancashire mosses, but is now only sparsely distributed. A cold egg was found on an old tip at Astley Flash in 1960.

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Or this, from the chapter on "Vegetation and Flora":

> The Manchester climate is nearly ideal for the development of dry-rot. . . . A smoky atmosphere has one great advantage: it has considerable fungicidal effect. Under the smoke-blanket few plants become seriously rusted or mildewed. Unfortunately, however, the preservative qualities of Manchester air do not seem to extend to books, leather, etc.

The wan, academic integrity of such passages is rather endearing; and I admired the ultimate straightforwardness of the writer on "Climate," who conceded that the crucial figures, which are not inches of rain but hours of sunshine, leave Manchester some way behind other parts of Britain. There was a gloomy fascination, elsewhere in the volume, in discovering that *Mancunium* (whence the name Manchester derives) is a corruption of the name of the original Roman fort *Mamucium*, which probably signified "place of the breast-like hill." The industrial cancer has long since destroyed that ancient mound.

Indeed, *Manchester And Its Region* is a useful compendium and I have not done it justice. My point is that too much justice has been done to Manchester already. Too many polite things have been said about it, and believed. The reality, a reality shared with most other built-up areas in the industrial North, is of ugliness: forlorn, protracted, wilful ugliness. It is the ugliness of poverty and misplaced wealth, of darkness and dampness and dirt, of slimy streets, pollution, bad air, decay, monotony, mediocrity. Manchester is the ugliest, least congenial large city that I have ever seen. The city-centre has almost nothing to recommend it by day; by night it is gloomy and deserted. The only recourse for the native Mancunian is to shut his eyes to the pervasive grubbiness and cheerlessness, and to forget that any other existence is possible. For the visitor who has not had the chance to train himself in apathy, Manchester is a sad shock. As befits the dreary city-centre, Manchester's airport has also been worse than any that even a much-travelled visitor could have encountered. It is named Ringway and would have been better named Ringworm. The visitor will discover that there is only one large hotel (though another is being built, with unbelievable slowness), and a quantity of execrable small ones. If he has come to examine manufactured products on display in one of Manchester's two exhibition halls, he will be appalled by a décor that alternates between the glum and the tatty—especially if he happens to have been in, say, Dortmund, an uncompromisingly industrial city which has nevertheless erected an elegant modern hall, with two new nearby hotels, good enough to attract political party conferences as well as industrial fairs. If the visitor goes in search of exquisite little restaurants, he is wasting his time. If he wishes to attend the theatre or a concert he will have to accustom himself to their barbarous beginning-hour of 7 p.m. He is quite likely to find half the seats empty, if he goes to a new pre-London offering at the principal theatre. The listlessness of the audience seems to communicate itself to the performers. Or perhaps the audience is empty-stomached, not having been able to eat a proper meal beforehand. This may explain the prodigious amount of smoking and sweet-sucking that accompanies the performance. A desolate sense of failure pervades many of the city's public cultural occasions. At lectures one sees the same small, faithful band over and over again. MICA, the Manchester Institute of Contemporary Arts, struggles to survive with only a few hundred members. An excellent exhibition of W. B. Yeats material, held under the University's auspices at the Whitworth Gallery, attracted a mere twelve hundred people (not counting members of the University).

THE CLIMATE must have a good deal to do with this. From the end of October until the end of February the sun seems in perpetual hiding. The air reeks of coal-smoke. Old people wheeze in doctors' waiting-rooms, children have sharp coughs and runny noses, bus-queues smell of wet wool and embrocation. After a few days of fog Manchester looks as though it has been steeped in some filthy fluid and will never revive or be clean again. In summer, when the factories may be closed for holidays and domestic fires remain unlit, there are clear days. But they are never *very* clear; there is still a grey filter across the sky. Manchester's festivals and recreations are likewise coated with glumness. There is a student Rag, held in February of all months, when undergraduates daubed with paint and wrapped in bed-linen or other half-hearted fancy dress parade the dank streets, shaking money-boxes at the populace. It is a pathetic spectacle. So are the Whitsuntide "Walks", the processions organised by local Sunday Schools. These ought to be fun, for the weather is usually an improvement on February's, and there are bands and

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banners and thousands of children in special finery. But to me they are even sadder than the Rag: more scrawny and sleazy, more forlornly indicative of the spiritual poverty of industrial folklore. The same blight affects Manchester's zoo and amusement-park, Belle Vue (which also houses Manchester's main exhibition hall). It ought to be a delightful place, and indeed there is something to be said for the amusement side of Belle Vue. But everything is dingy and patched, blotched and botched; and the zoo animals somehow look as though, like Manchester's human inhabitants, they are wearing dirty mackintoshes.

Two characteristic responses, then, to the Manchesters of Britain. One is to suppress all the evidence of wit and sense, and to pretend that they are grand, successful communities. The other is to reject them: to grouse and grumble and detest, to emigrate southward if possible, to escape southward and sunward on holidays (leaving Blackpool and the other traditional resorts of the industrial North threatened with bankruptcy).

WHAT HAS HAPPENED? How far is Manchester to blame for Manchester's drab unpopularity? Can anything be done about it? In part, the North can be regarded as the victim of circumstance. Not so very long ago, the British climate seemed endurable and even agreeable. When white skin was fashionable for women, the pale English sunlight was a positive attraction. One remembers the summers of childhood as being brighter than those of to-day. Memory is false. The climate is the same: it is expectation that has changed. There is a world-wide demand for light air, warm days, tanned skin, a worldwide drift of population to the South—to the Mediterranean, to California and Florida. Britain as a whole is unlucky in having no genuine South of this kind. Its reputation for bad weather becomes fearsome and ceases to be a joke. Foreign tourists avoid it, its own natives flee to the Riviera or the Costa Brava. We seem to labour under daunting handicaps, for example in sport. How can the British hope to win international contests in soccer, cricket, tennis, golf, when the seasons are so short, the ground so peculiarly soggy? But if Britain as a whole suffers from such comparisons, quintessential Manchester suffers most of all. It becomes less and less desirable as a place to live in. Within Britain, there is a domestic drift southward, in search of more sunshine, cleaner air, newer buildings. No tremendous difference is of course made by heading 150–200 miles south, though there is some improvement. The important thing is the attitude of mind—the southward, sunward yearning, to come as close as possible to that paradise of swimming pools, ski-slopes, and "Hollywood tans" which is thrust before us in living colour by the movies and the popular magazines.

MANCHESTER has been unlucky in a second respect. It has suffered from the widespread British dislike for living in cities—a dislike whose consequences are apparent even in London, late at night or on weekends. Manchester as a city is almost entirely a creation of the Industrial Revolution. The poor lived in the centre; the mark of wealth was to get as far outside as possible. Hence the dead and gloomy central district, with its blocks of offices and warehouses; hence the absence of effective civic pride. Manchester is in fact, as the British Association volume points out, a comparatively prosperous city, which has survived the crash of the cotton industry and has little unemployment. Plenty of money is made there. Yet it feels impoverished and parochial. Compare Manchester, for instance, with Barcelona, a provincial city also based on industry and also built largely in the 19th century. I would guess that Manchester is statistically a richer place, with a higher average living-standard. Why then does Barcelona seem so much more stylish, more metropolitan—more of a city in every way? The chief reason, surely, is that its wealth is concentrated, and visible, and local in circulation. Manchester's wealth is dispersed among the dormitory suburbs and the villages of Cheshire. The prosperous Mancunian's wife prefers to disown her ties with the city. She would like to be thought of as a member of the Cheshire gentry; and her major shopping expeditions are "up to Town"—by which she means London. Poor old betrayed, abandoned Manchester.

Manchester is the victim of a third factor, which like the first has world-wide applications. The populations of Europe and America are not only moving towards the sun, they are moving towards the metropolitan centres. The process is complicated and varies in detail from country to country. Broadly, it seems true that even a big country tends to have only one genuine cultural and financial centre, and that this—New York, Tokyo, Buenos Aires, Paris,

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Rome, London—grows and grows at the expense of the provinces, by drawing in their talent. But there are mitigating circumstances in some countries. If they are big enough in area, like the United States, it is possible for certain provincial cities (such as Chicago and San Francisco) to enjoy a quasi-metropolitan atmosphere. Or if there are old, traditional autonomies and separatisms, as in Spain or Germany, the provincial capitals may retain much of their pride and style. Barcelona has done so, and Cologne, Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart. One test of quasi-metropolitan standing is the existence of publishing houses. They can thrive in Barcelona, or the German cities, or for that matter in Edinburgh. But not in Manchester. Geographically and historically it is ill-favoured. It is too near to London; it grew too fast, unable to control the situation, unable to come to terms with Salford and the other portions of the Manchester conurbation. Only in a dubious sense is Manchester the capital of the North. It is the headquarters of the BBC's Northern Region and of Granada TV, which has begun to refer to the North as Granadaland; northern editions of national daily newspapers are printed in Manchester. But these are mere depot activities in the main. (The *Guardian* is a very good newspaper, but in becoming primarily a national newspaper it has inevitably become less concerned with *Manchester's* welfare.) Granada has complained recently (to the Pilkington Committee) that Manchester is a cultural desert, an almost impossible place from which to run a television network. Nearly all the talent has to be imported from London and the South, at a huge cost in travel and hotel expenses. To judge from recent advertisements in praise of Granadaland, the egg is decidedly cold. What is Granadaland famous for? Why, we are told, for such things as the birthplace of Gladstone (Liverpool, 1809). This is mortuary information. One begins to feel that Manchester, like a nation beaten in war, is fixated on the past: that it does not wish emotionally to come closer to the present than 1914, preferring to linger in the golden era of the Ship Canal, and the *Guardian* under C. P. Scott, back in the days when the privately endowed Rylands Library and Whitworth Art Gallery still had some money left, and the Cotton Exchange was humming.

It may be said that these remarks are hostile and incomplete. For instance, Ringworm Airport is about to be transformed: the new terminal buildings, not more than a couple of years behind schedule, have been formally opened by Prince Philip, although they have then had to be closed again for a while to await the finishing touches.

Or we may be told that Manchester and Salford, and some other towns in the neighbourhood, are extending the number of smokeless zones. But their efforts are still on a minor scale, and rendered almost useless by the reluctance of other towns to do anything about smoke-abatement. Or we may hear that the city centre is being rebuilt, in bits, only twenty-two years after it was bombed, and that the new buildings are architecturally no worse than most of the new stuff in London. Or we may be reminded that the College of Science and Technology is developing at a great rate, and that so are other parts of the University (Jodrell Bank, for example; and a promising new "student village" in the suburb known as Fallowfield). True. But the new buildings on the main site of the University are sadly miscellaneous; and I wonder whether they may be taken to symbolize the current spirit of the University. I wonder whether students and faculty will be drawn to such a place if they can manage instead to get into one of the modern, non-industrial and mainly Southern universities such as Brighton and Norwich. Will these new foundations come to rank immediately after Oxbridge, so that the industrial universities (Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, possibly Birmingham) slump in relative prestige?

Perhaps Manchester is a hopeless case. Perhaps its reputation is thoroughly deserved, and self-inflicted—not something to be blamed away on the past, or on the wickedness of London and the South. Certainly it is in a mess. Yet there are hopeful signs. The classic pre-conditions for a revolution are present—namely, a combination of discontent and partial reform. The improvements one can begin to see (the airport, the plans for the city centre) provoke dissatisfaction because they are not wholesale or rapid enough. And there are symptoms of a local alarm and self-criticism analogous to the new nation-wide uneasiness. More and more people in Britain, especially those who have been to America or to the Continent, believe it is time for a drastic overhaul. On the local scale, more and more Mancunians realise that the place is a disgrace. If it does not take action, it will be doomed. This sounds melodramatic. But I do believe it will quickly get worse if it does not quickly get better.

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THE CHANGED MOOD IN BRITAIN is, paradoxically, somewhat "Northern" in sentiment. Along with the swimming pool and the ski-slope, the Northern industrial landscape and the Northern accent are in vogue. This blunt, grey, non-U style seems to express a national need—a need, perhaps, to escape from the genteel anachronisms of Southern England. One should not exaggerate. The Faulkner country of the United States has also been tremendously in vogue without luring civilised people to go and settle there. Similarly, the Northern backdrop in *A Taste of Honey* or *A Kind of Loving* is more of a literary phenomenon than a tourist attraction. Nevertheless the fact of provincialism, the absence of affectation, the genuine Northern good-humour, the freedom from the distorted vowels of the Queen's English: these have a real if equivocal appeal for Britain today.

WHAT MUST Manchester do to be saved? The essential step towards improvement is to get rid of the Bandar-log nonsense. Mancunians must be ready to acknowledge—how can they deny it, once they have travelled elsewhere?—that their region is culpably, unnecessarily, and disastrously ugly. There must be a new civic pride in place of the old claptrap. Manchester did have something to boast about, once. It was healthily confident and aggressive. The building of the Ship Canal was a bold response to the threat of economic decline. Manchester needs to react today with equal audacity.

But how? Exhortation is easy, active reformation less so. Northern provincialism has a certain likeable stolidity. Its profound lack of chic, its aesthetic insensibility are in some ways less disagreeable than the glib world conjured up by London glossy magazines. I would almost rather stick to the old dirt-concealing Northern hues—congealed blood, gravy brown, and the virulent yet sombre tone that I have heard described as suicide green—than be stampeded into painting my house this year in next year's OK colours. I almost prefer dirty raincoats and indeterminate head-gear to curl-brim bowlers and elastic-sided boots. But whatever one's preference, it has to be expressed negatively. There is no authentic provincial style, or at least little that can be usefully recovered. Stubborn localisms persist, especially in the smaller towns. But for a region like Manchester, with ambitions to qualify as a great city, these buried loyalties are more of a nuisance than an asset. There is not much distinctness, despite aldermanic assertions, in places like Salford and Stretford. Northern working-class culture is pallid and generalised. The splendid fervour of the Rochdale Pioneers has thickened into the dull empire of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. No-one can wish to preserve items of regional costume such as wooden clogs, which were an aspect of deprivation—the expedient of mill-workers unable to afford leather boots. And since the Northern "style," insofar as it has any recognisable quality, is expressed negatively, as indifference to or dislike of cosmopolitan nattiness, perhaps no industrial city in Britain can be expected to develop a large theatre-going, restaurant-frequenting, window-gazing, self-consciously modish public.

Indeed in moments of depression it seems impossible to imagine an industrial-provincial existence that is not *per se* dour and second-rate. The past lays an immense burden upon the North, an almost intangible physical weight, just as the actual site of Mamucium is overlaid with viaducts, factories, slums. Each shift in technology seems to worsen the mortmain of industrialism. Down in slow ruin go the canals, the cotton mills, the coalmines, the shipyards, the railways and their workshops. The Northern heritage could be seen as a sequence of generations of factory hands, not greatly altered from the operatives that Engels or Mrs. Gaskell observed, except that like their employers they have gradually lost their stuffing. Efforts at betterment begin to seem futile. I know enough of the problems of university expansion in the middle of a Northern slum, for example, to realise how hard it is to carry through the erection of even an ugly building. To cry out for an architectural masterpiece is to sound a little daft and irresponsible.

So the disgruntled Northerner takes refuge in fantasy: for instance, in dreaming of some national tax based differentially and inversely upon hours of sunshine, by which Southerners would pay heavily while Mancunians were let off lightly as compensation for the lack of lightness in their sky. Or he comes near to wishing that the German bombers had taken Manchester at its own Bandar-log valuation and flattened the whole area, thus compelling a complete new start.

Perversely, a Northerner like myself also dislikes most of what is being done to change things. He regrets the proliferating suburbs, jaundiced by their sodium lamps; and the razing of rows of old central terrace houses, and of the

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big gaunt superfluous churches, which all had *some* character, even if a bad one. He cannot muster up enthusiasm for the flavourless modern buildings that eventually replace them in the central districts. He mistrusts the schemes of city-developers with their alluring, spick-and-span models. He suspects that the more comprehensive these schemes are, the less chance they have of being put into effect; and that the most likely outcome is a random sprouting of office blocks, even more depressing than those of London because the provincial city provides nothing else to distract the eye. Grimy obsolescence makes way for mediocre modernness. In clearing away the débris of the past one achieves anonymity.

Yet if it is difficult to rediscover or invent an attractive regional-industrial style, something can be done. Manchester and other Northern cities could be quite good places to live in. They have distinct advantages over the metropolis, in being large but not too large for comfort. They are eyesores but they are not wens. And the people of these cities *are* likeable, although they are too fond of telling you so. There is such a quality as Northerness, which is not entirely negative. If the North has not been fatally saddled with the industrial past, it could help to rescue England as well as itself.

THE FIRST NECESSITY is to separate, in the legacy of the past, the proud from the shameful elements. There is a legitimate piety. Manchester should cherish and refurbish some remnants of its inheritance: an early railway station, a canal basin, statues of Cobden and Bright. It should open a museum of technological history. The docks should be made more presentable and accessible: at present you can live in Manchester without seeing any proof that it is a large port. Above all, the atmosphere must be purified. The dirt from innumerable chimneys must be eliminated, far quicker than has hitherto been thought feasible. Nothing would do more to raise morale.

As for the future, the important point is to accept the handicaps of the situation, and organise life accordingly. Even with a bold smoke-abatement plan the atmosphere will still be damp and overcast. Manchester *has* a dull climate. The norm is a grey day with a chance of drizzle; there is no sense in dreaming of open-air cafés or pedestrian concourses. This being so, the city-centre should not be left grey and naked. It ought to be astonishingly bright, in colour and illumination, to offset the natural gloom instead of succumbing to it. If mankind can live at the North Pole in moderate ease, the problem of life in the industrial North ought not to be insoluble. Buildings could be surfaced, for example, not in smeary concrete, cheerless glass, ordinary brick or even Portland stone, but with brilliantly coloured washable tile. It should not only be washable, it should be washed—with fanatical frequency. Old-style pubs used to be tiled in this way; they were not very gay but they were durable and distinctive. Modern builders do sometimes employ tiling, but the colours are usually anaemic and the detailing fussy. When will an architect put up a gorgeously bright building in a Northern city?

And let us be protected from the climate by being roofed under glass. The 19th-century arcade is an ideal arrangement for the English climate. It can also be commercially successful, if the *Galleria* in Milan and the Burlington Arcade in London are relevant models. Manchester ought to emulate them, but more comprehensively. Let it start by roofing over with glass the pavements of the main shopping streets, and then by degrees create a whole glassed-in city centre. Some corners should be heated in winter, to cheer people up and dry them out. The sunken part of Manchester's Piccadilly could be turned into a vast conservatory for tropical plants. How delicious it would be to walk there in November. The same glassing-in treatment should be applied to Belle Vue. People would come there for the very reasons that now keep them away: namely, because it is raining, or might rain soon.

The result would be eminently rational and congenial. It would also be a little bizarre, if carried out with imagination. The more bizarre the better, commercially as well as aesthetically. Modern cities grow more alike. Visitors, especially when they come by air, pine for some token of uniqueness, some reassurance that they did not get off at the wrong place. Manchester should provide some pleasurable reassurances, for travellers and for natives. It could establish a style in which climate was a genuine asset: in which the past was made interesting but not oppressive: and from which the whole of this damp island might learn lessons again from the industrial North. If no such rebirth occurs, one will have to conclude that there is no real future in Britain for regional pride (as opposed to local jingoism), and certainly not for the where-there's-muck-there's-money towns.

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Herbert Luethy

Has Switzerland a Future?

The Dilemma of the Small Nation

Good family portraits are never painted by members of the family concerned, and it would take a non-Swiss to produce a really good portrait of Switzerland. Usually, the members of a given family are conscious of being individuals with marked physical and mental differences, and they are not necessarily very fond of each other. Only to the outsider do they appear to have the same nose or the same style of behaviour—that is a "family air." Not only are the Swiss aware of being different from each other, they cherish their differences. Each canton or town delights in making fun of, or gossiping maliciously about, the others, and if the Swiss in general like or at least tolerate their compatriots, they do so precisely for the sake of the dissimilarities between them. If you ask one of them where he comes from, the chances are that he will not say: "I'm a Swiss." He will tell you that he is from Basle—taking care to point out that he means Basle city and its Left Bank—or from the canton or Vaud or Grisons.

The Swiss have to be looked at from outside if one wants to see how they resemble each other, and one of the most striking features they have in common is precisely their local patriotism, their jealous, and sometimes caricatural, sense of regional identity, that *Kantönligeist* which ensures the unity of Switzerland, while appearing to deny it. There is something puzzling about this for the observer belonging to one of the great European nations, or one of the less great, or even one of the many new nations now in process of formation all over the world and eager to achieve unity. A Breton, Basque, or Alsatian nationalist is very likely to be a bad Frenchman; a Welshman in favour of self-government for Wales will be a doubtful Britisher; in other countries too, separatist movements endanger national unity—the Tridentines and Sicilians in the case of Italy, the Andhra in India, the Ashanti in Ghana, not to mention the inhabitants of Katanga in the Congo. But the believer in self-government for the cantons of Valais or Grisons or Appenzell is a model Swiss patriot, in fact the type of man to whom Switzerland owes her existence. And these cantons contain no separatists, because each canton is not only self-governing but also, according to the Constitution, a sovereign body. Article One of the Swiss Constitution defines the Confederation as an alliance of the people of the twenty-two cantons or sovereign states of Switzerland. All modern states have come into being through struggling against the regionalism of their component parts; Switzerland, however, was a product of such regionalism and has been sustained, in the often serious crises of her history, by the local patriotism of her "twenty-two peoples," to quote the picturesque expression used in the basic legal text.

Switzerland does not occupy a large space on the globe. It is no more than a small patch in the middle of Europe, and it can be crossed by train, from Basle to Chiasso, in four-and-a-half hours. It is a small country, apparently well-run and rather self-satisfied, which owes any impression of size it is able to give to the fact that it concentrates great topographical, anthropological, and linguistic variety into one small area. The five million inhabitants speak four languages, as well as several dialects clearly distinguishable by, although unintelligible to, the foreigner; they are divided into two major

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and several minor religious groups; they combine modern technological processes with the most archaic life-styles, and they are at the meeting point of three West-European cultures. This diversity, of which the linguistic aspect is not the most far-reaching but the most immediately striking, is not without its disadvantages. How is the country to be called, for instance? *Die Schweiz*, *La Suisse*, *La Svizzera*, or by its three-fold official name, *Die schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft*, *La Confédération suisse*, or *La Confederazione helvetica*? The Swiss post-office has solved the difficulty by putting on its postage-stamps the Latin word, *Helvetia*, which is equidistant from the three official, and the four national languages. As for those Swiss whose activities bring them into contact with the different parts of the country—Federal civil servants, politicians, businessmen, teachers, office-workers, or manual labourers moving from one area to another—they get along as best they can in one language or another. Swiss Federal French has been very much criticised, and not always without reason; Swiss German still more so, and a separate chapter would be needed to deal with the difficulties of Swiss Italian, the mother-tongue of barely five per cent of the population, and of Romansch, the isolated language used by inhabitants of the mountains and which, in fact, comprises five ancient tongues, each spoken by a few thousand people.

Disadvantages, difficulties, misunderstandings, reduplications—we put up with them all; all our governmental, administrative, and economic activities, all discussions which go beyond purely local issues, in short, everything which is truly Swiss, takes place in this multiplicity of languages, which entails thinking and feeling in a variety of ways, and this complexity is not looked upon as a hardship, but as a precious possession of which we should take good care. If Switzerland were a single, uniform entity, we should consider that it had lost its *raison d'être*.

AT THE same time, it is too often forgotten, or just not known, that the cultural and linguistic variety of Switzerland is something comparatively recent. The fundamental traditions of the country are, and the first five centuries of its history were, almost entirely Alemanic,* like three-quarters of the population. How is it that Switzerland was able to attract and retain the allegiance of French and Italian-speaking populations who, when given the choice—and it was offered to them in times of great stress—freely decided to become Swiss, without fearing that they might be crushed in a mass that was three-quarters Alemanic?

There was, of course, one inevitable and fundamental condition; the political decision to become Swiss had not to interfere in any way with the freedom to remain within the orbit of French or Italian culture. In other words, the Alemanic majority had to be careful not to try to impose its will, its ways of thought, or its style of behaviour on the non-Alemanic areas, not even in little things—and especially not in little things. The extraordinary fact is that this condition never needed to be formally expressed; it has always been taken for granted. Even during the period when a group of Alemanic cantons were the overlords of Tessino and the *Magnifiques Seigneurs* of Berne ruled over the Vaud, they put themselves to the trouble of conducting their administration in the language of their subjects. Consequently, when the armies of the *Directoire* and Napoleon's troops brought them freedom at the point of the bayonet, the former subjects decided to be free and self-governing, but as Swiss—*liberi e Svizzeri* was the motto on the Tessino banners—instead of merging with their respective nations. As soon as the Napoleonic armies were defeated, the Valais, Geneva and Neuchâtel, which had been incorporated into France, promptly asked to join Switzerland. Happening as it did, at a time when Switzerland, torn by invasion, was at her weakest, this was a sort of miracle, the greatest perhaps in Swiss history, and one that is too little talked about. It was the origin of modern Switzerland, too often confused with the previous Switzerland, and has been its justification for the last century-and-a-half.

DOES THE EXPLANATION lie in the character of the Alemanic Swiss? Are they gentler, more tolerant, more open-minded to the manners and ideas of other nations than the peoples of this world usually are? Not at all; the opposite is rather the case. Swiss history is not remarkable for gentleness, tolerance, or open-mindedness, and even to-day these civilised virtues have not been completely acclimatised amongst us. Have we then to appeal to the theory of

* *Tr. Note:* Swiss usage, interestingly enough, prefers "Alemanic" to "German," just as it prefers "Weltsch" to "French."

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historical accident? There have been such accidents and I should like to quote two which have been very important in ensuring harmony between populations speaking different languages.

Switzerland—by which I mean that alliance of valleys and towns which developed in the Alemanic area in the 13th and 14th centuries—defended and maintained a Germanic tradition of regional democracy against all those unifying and imperialistic tendencies which were eventually to prevail in Germany. On the linguistic level, this regional, democratic spirit has been illustrated by the vitality of the local Alemanic dialects, which is such as to make a German from Germany feel just as much a foreigner in Switzerland as an Italian or a Spaniard might. On some occasions in recent history, sturdy adherence to the dialect has amounted to a political gesture. Unlike French which, in theory at least, is the same in French-speaking Switzerland as in France, German, in Alemanic Switzerland, is an official, almost a learned, language, which is written but not spoken, and which is scarcely used in everyday life. In Zürich, Berne, and still more so in the rural districts of Alemanic Switzerland, if you ask your way in French, you may not be better understood but you will probably get a readier welcome than if you spoke in the German of Germany.

This hostility to German is unpleasant and in some ways petty, yet there are reasons for it, recent and remote. At various time, Alemanic Switzerland has had to be passionately concerned about keeping Germany and the German language at arm's length. This has been one of the hidden causes helping to compensate for the numerical inferiority of those who speak a Swiss German dialect; it has put the minority dialect on a level with the majority language, or even in a comparatively privileged position. Another cause is to be found in the religious alignments. Owing to historical accident, of the French-speaking cantons, three are Protestant and two Catholic, which is more or less the same proportion as in Alemanic Switzerland, and this creates loyalties and affinities which counterbalance the linguistic inter-relationships. Similarly, we have Conservative, Liberal, and Socialist parties, but there is no Swiss-French or Alemanic party. In no sphere and on no level do Alemanic and French Switzerland form separate, hostile blocs, comparable, for instance, to the Walloon and Flemish parts of Belgium. There are never two blocs in Switzerland; there is only a richly varied, endlessly complex, mosaic—linguistic, religious, regional, and political—of diverse ways of living and feeling. There is never *one* majority opposed to several minorities, but only minorities which line up together in unpredictable ways according to each issue that arises.

It follows that the common and simple definition of democracy as the rule of the majority and the submission of the minority, does not hold good in Switzerland, because Switzerland would not stand for it; it is not a democracy governed by a majority, but a collection of little communal and cantonal democracies, each of them looking after its own affairs and all of them coming together to settle only those questions which are of more than local importance, and doing so more often by way of compromise than through taking a majority decision.

A Famous Victory

IT MUST be frankly admitted that both in the living and the petrified aspects of its system of government, Switzerland is one of the most archaic countries of the West. Certain features of its mentality and institutions would no doubt be more comprehensible to a Congolese, devoted to his tribe and his village, than to one of our French neighbours, accustomed to the disciplines involved in belonging to a single, indivisible state. The fact is that the basic structure of Switzerland dates back to a time when the modern conception of the state had not yet come into being.

However, the peculiarity of Switzerland is not so much a result of its mediæval beginnings as of the fact that the old foundations have survived the upheavals of the modern world and have even proved adaptable to new needs. The country originated in a movement which, at the time, was in progress all over Western and Central Europe; everywhere the urban or rural communes were breaking loose from their temporal and spiritual overlords by buying their freedom or establishing it by force, and allying with each other to maintain their liberties in the face of feudal pressure. They were thinking not of liberty, but of liberties in the plural, that is of communal and local, not individual and egalitarian, rights, not of the rights of man or of all men, but of rights acquired or fought for by a community determined to look after its own affairs, to live under its own laws, to be judged by its own judges,

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and to accept restrictions of its own making. In short, their conception of freedom was the primitive—or shall I say tribal—one expressed by the laconic demand of the first Charter of the three cantons: we refuse to accept judges who do not belong to our valleys. Which meant: we will not have foreigners meddling in our affairs. What was peculiar at the time to Switzerland was that the movement derived its basic strength not from the towns, as was the case in Germany and Italy, but from the Alpine communities whose mountains served as ramparts and whose collective institutions corresponded to their economic functioning. The assembly which met in springtime in each valley to settle when the flocks should be taken up to the mountain pastures, appointed the shepherds, and organised the communal work of repairing roads and bridges damaged during the winter, also chose the political leaders and the justices of the peace and, if need be, decided on peace or war.

THE MOUNTAIN COMMUNES provided the Swiss League with an impregnable fortress and formidable military strength which reinforced the militia troops of the towns below the mountains, at a time when, everywhere else, the communal movement was being broken up and crushed by the feudal lords. A hundred years after the signing of the first Charter of the three cantons, the alliance of the free Swiss communes was winning decisive and definitive victories over the feudal armies at the very time when, in 1388, its allies on the other side of the Rhine, the South German towns, were being defeated and their League was being broken up. From that point onwards, the destiny of Switzerland was different from that of Germany, even though the official separation of the two countries did not take place until much later. Henceforth, Switzerland remained as a bastion of communal particularism in a Europe which was about to develop into a system of unified territorial states.

LET ME PASS rapidly over the rest of the confused and stormy history of the country and over its centuries of stagnation. Each episode left a permanent mark. When Swiss military power was at its height, it was rendered inoperative by the political weakness of an alliance between heterogeneous local units. The consequence was, first, the defensive retreat into the bastion, then the neutrality of Switzerland in European affairs, neutrality made permanent by the split in religion. The urban middle classes, who led completely self-centred lives, ceased to develop. There was corruption in the cantons which supplied mercenaries. Division and confusion followed the entry of the French revolutionary army which, however, provided the cruel but salutary stimulus that was needed before a new start could be made.

But one thing must be firmly borne in mind, because it is the key to the understanding of Switzerland. In the midst of these vicissitudes, the country remained, or rather became, more completely and in a more balanced fashion, that alliance of independent communes which only decided to delegate part of their authority to a general executive when it became clear that there was no other means of saving the essential features of regional autonomy. The Federal state ensures a common front in diplomacy and defence, and more recently in certain economic matters, so that the independence of each member-community can be safeguarded. In this respect, Switzerland has developed in a way completely opposed to the whole European trend of the last few centuries. Through the maintenance of her basic mediæval structure, she has never had any experience of either the unified, centrally administered state or of the doctrine of single, indivisible sovereignty which, in the monarchical régimes, prepared the way for massive, egalitarian democracy. The nation was therefore never identified with the state, and Switzerland passed through the age of the nation-states—of which we are now contemplating the last vestiges in Europe—not only without becoming involved in it but while presenting it with the challenge of a multinational, pluralist federation. Through its very existence, and through the concept of freely united communities living in harmony, Switzerland was the negation of what was considered to be the inevitable historical movement towards the formation of great organised masses, and a constant demonstration of the fact that men can govern themselves without becoming slaves to the machinery of government.

WHEN I try to define our system of government, I am conscious of the weight of history, because this system is the result of centuries of trial and error. I also come up against another linguistic difficulty which arises even between the Swiss themselves when their mother-tongues are different. If the

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Alemanic Swiss wish to refer to the country with a certain degree of solemnity, they call it *die Eidgenossenshaft*. When they are using a more familiar style, they say: *der Bund*. And the two terms, both equally serious, are used alternatively in the articles of the Federal Constitution, in the text of the law, and in official statements. The second term, *der Bund*, means alliance; the first, more solemn, one means sworn alliance, with the full religious sense of an irreversible, indissoluble oath, and echoes the words used in the Charter of 1291, which marked the founding of the Swiss League; in that document, the men of the three cantons styled themselves *coniurati*, sworn allies.

No other modern state uses such terms, and it is quite impossible to translate them into international legal language. Even in German, they arouse only very vague memories dating back to the anarchic period of the Holy Roman Empire. What is more paradoxical is that French and Italian, which are precise legal languages, have no equivalent terms, and therefore French and Italian-speaking Swiss have none either. This is a constant source of misunderstandings, which are all the more irritating through being at first sight hardly noticeable. The French-speaking Swiss refer to the *Confédération*; this is a learned word, taken from manuals of public law, and it has neither the homely quality nor the almost mystic overtones of *Eidgenossenshaft*; but this Confederation is also a federation and an alliance. The French version of the Constitution bears the title: *Constitution fédérale de la Confédération suisse*, and in Article One, which I have already quoted, it defines that Confederation as an alliance of twenty-two sovereign states.

A SPECIALIST IN public law is likely to wring his hands in despair at the thought of such legal confusion. But Switzerland is not a rationally constituted entity. The apparent confusion is the result of centuries of history during which the successive stages of development—allied cantons, confederate cantons, and cantons subject to a common federal authority—have been superimposed on one another, without the present ever abolishing the past. All the old patterns survive in the present pattern. In the minds of the Swiss people, in their unwritten traditions, and even in the Constitution and in contemporary institutions, Switzerland is still fundamentally that defensive alliance of small, even tiny, independent communities whose aim was not to fuse into a state, but to ensure the common defence of the independence of each member. And although the necessities of the modern world, the scope of modern economic life with the social upheavals it brings in its train, and the now well-established habit of living together, have gradually drawn the alliance closer so that the confederation of states has changed into a Federal state, resembling a unitary state in a very decentralised form, the alliance would nevertheless lose its *raison d'être* if it ever took the form of an obligatory unity, imposed by the majority or for the sake of efficiency.

THE FEW foreigners who have taken the trouble to give close study to our institutions and their working have all been struck by their archaic, not to say anachronistic, quality, when compared to those of the other countries of the modern world. And I take the term "modern" in the widest sense, since it is now 250 years since a British ambassador to Switzerland stated (in a book published in 1713) that it was impossible to fit Switzerland into any of the categories of contemporary states.

Foreigners are always astonished to learn that Switzerland is an alliance of independent communes and that, properly speaking, there is no such thing as Swiss citizenship; a Swiss is born a citizen of Thun, Pompaples, or Valpaschün, and it is through belonging to his commune that he becomes a citizen of the canton of Berne or Vaud or Grisons and enjoys his rights as a Swiss.

And consider Swiss democracy in action, preferably outside the big towns where it is rather obscured by the anonymous mass of people. Every Sunday, the inhabitants of scores of communes go to the polling booths to elect their civil servants, ratify such and such an item of expenditure, or decide whether a road or a school should be built; after settling the business of the commune, they deal with cantonal elections and voting on cantonal issues; lastly, like surface waves sweeping at rarer intervals across water that is constantly stirring in its depths, come the decisions on federal issues. In some cantons, the sovereign people still meet in Rousseau-like fashion to discuss questions of common interest. It may be thought that this ancient form of assembly is no more than a pious tradition with a certain value as a tourist

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attraction. If so, it is worth looking at the results of local democracy.

THE SIMPLEST EXAMPLE is the Swiss railway system, which is the densest network in the world. At great cost and with great trouble, it has been made to serve the needs of the smallest localities and most remote valleys, not as a paying proposition but because such was the will of the people. It is the outcome of fierce political struggles. In the 19th century, the "democratic railway movement" brought the small Swiss communities into conflict with the big towns, which had plans for centralisation; Winterthur was opposed to Zürich, Yverdon to Lausanne, Le Locle to Neuchâtel. And if we compare the Swiss system with the French which, with admirable geometrical regularity, is entirely centred on Paris so that the prosperity or the decline, the life or death of whole regions has depended on the quality of the link with the capital, we see the difference between a centralised state and a federal alliance. The railway map is the easiest to read at a glance, but let us now superimpose on it another showing economic activity and the movement of population. The distribution of industrial activity all over Switzerland, even in the outlying areas, and the existence in small country towns of businesses with international connections, account for the strength and stability of the social structure of the country and prevented those horrible 19th-century concentrations of industry, with their slums and rootless proletariat.

All this is related to the political system and to the strength of local democracy which have allowed the communes to resist inhuman economic rationalisation. It is true, of course, that everything has to be paid for and that this advantage has its negative side; if countries are to be judged by their capital cities, Switzerland is not very impressive because it has no splendid capital, but on the other hand, it has no neglected, sluggish, or enfeebled provinces. The life of the country is not concentrated in one favoured area; it circulates throughout the whole, and this amply makes up for what is lacking.

IT IS, in fact, Switzerland's most striking achievement, because it is a victory over nature. Switzerland is a poor country with few resources and her soil is not, on the whole, very fertile; one-third, even, is barren. Without minerals, raw materials, ports, or communication facilities, Switzerland is rich only in stone and water. Before it began to export watches, precision instruments, patents, and engineers, the country was obliged to export soldiers and farm labourers. It has now reached a point at which it has begun to import workers from abroad, but formerly, throughout its history, its people were in the habit of emigrating to earn a living. The Constitution, which dates from the middle of last century, bears witness to the recent poverty of the country; its references to "public relief" and more particularly to the duties of the communes towards their poor seem rather out-of-date to-day, but they represent an essential aspect of communal solidarity; one of the links binding the individual to his commune was that it was his ultimate refuge in distress.

To-day, Switzerland is generally considered to be a rich country, or at least comfortably off. But its prosperity has been achieved inch by inch, from one generation to the next, and thanks to conscientious hard work and a judicious use of limited resources. This again is linked with the political structure, because the economical use of human and material resources is not normally a characteristic of great merchantilist state-planning machines used to handling vast national revenues. But it is a feature of small communities struggling to make a living and all of whose members know that their personal survival depends on the prosperity of the whole. The sense of solidarity thus engendered has always helped to reduce social strife—for instance, in the watchmaking industry of the Jura or the cotton industry of Glaris. There is a concrete, physical awareness of the general interest, an instinctive sharing of responsibilities, and a respect for public money and public property, which are rarely acquired in the anonymous functioning of a great state administration, and still less in the impersonal mass of some vast business concern. In discussing the expenditure of some small or middle-sized community, each inhabitant is aware that he is dealing with his personal concerns.

This tradition, and the mentality resulting from it, undoubtedly have their unpleasant aspects; there is a certain kind of Swiss meanness, a horror of the non-utilitarian, a collective hostility to the fanciful, which have tended to discourage grace and inspiration. One can still feel among those who lived through the strain

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of the 'thirties how hard it was for them to hold their own when their little country with insufficient resources of its own and a very small protected market had to stand up to great powers armed with all the weapons of modern protectionism. All this is past history, it would seem. We are now prosperous, thanks to laborious effort, the accumulation of capital, great technical experience, and established reputation for quality, patents, and an international business network with branches and investments all over the world. This is a very good thing, but I should fear for the future if a generation came along which had forgotten that established positions are fragile, unless constantly reconquered by renewed effort, and that the Swiss economy is a triumph over natural conditions which will never allow us to rest on our laurels. If we did, they would soon wither.

Questions and Contradictions

I MAY SEEM to have praised Switzerland too highly. My aim has been to give a very rapid sketch of the way the country grew up and of the traditions and efforts that went to its making. I have also tried to explain how Switzerland sees herself, for such knowledge is essential to anyone trying to understand the country. But does Switzerland see herself as she really is?

That is a different question, and not only foreign observers but also critically-minded Swiss themselves may sometimes have the impression that we are living on a past which is no longer really alive, that we have turned our idea of Switzerland into an ideology or a myth and that we are shutting our eyes to the fact that present realities are far removed from this myth. Rousseau's conception of democracy, which supposes an assembly of free men bearing arms, who express their opinions openly and have to have the courage of their convictions since voting is by a show of hands, is still, consciously or unconsciously, our fundamental conception, and the great, successful democratic movements of last century were of this kind; they operated directly by means of open-air gatherings of free men.

But does such democracy exist anywhere any more, outside the old cantons which have a *Landsgemeinde*? I have been surprised, and sometimes amused, to hear it used as a sentimental argument by Alemanic Swiss opposed to votes for women—defenders of tradition who bore no resemblance to Stauffacher and Winkelried of heroic memory.

Is Switzerland really a federation of free communes managing their own affairs in a fully responsible way? We are attached to this conception and we know that it still holds good for many areas of Switzerland, but unfortunately these are not the most forward-looking. The responsible conduct of local affairs does not amount to much in towns like Zürich or Geneva or Basle, where the citizens rooted in local traditions and informed about local affairs are a minority, and a good third of the electorate consists of temporary residents who have spent less than two years in the town.

I have been living for the last two years in a district of Zürich, and every now and again I have to vote on the question of appointments to such and such a primary school, or the selection of a judge for the district tribunal or an alteration to a street. I confess to my shame that in most instances I know none of the names of the candidates and I am ignorant of the reasons for the alteration, and I cannot even console myself with the thought that I am exceptional in this. And in the outlying communes of the big towns, which are really dormitory communes for people who do their work, make their purchases, live their lives, and pass their leisure hours in the centre, communal life and communal independence and solidarity do not amount to much.

IN SPITE OF the durability of the old social structures and the balanced relationship between the various regions, the social mobility caused by industrialisation is producing its effect. The organic framework of social life is no longer provided by the commune where a given individual resides, and still less so by his native commune which gave him his citizenship. Also, it is well known that *Landesplanung* (Town and Country Planning) is made very difficult by cantonal and communal independence. If land-development continues haphazardly according to individual initiative, we shall be faced, in ten or twenty years' time, with the horrid prospect of an unbroken built-up area between Lake Constance and Lake Geneva. The spirit of local independence will thus have destroyed the setting required for its survival.

And I need only mention in passing to what labyrinthine expedients of subsidies, guarantees, and protective tariffs we have resorted in order to defend our ancient peasant social

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structure. Apart from a few local variations, it is the same rearguard action as is being fought throughout the West, and which is its greatest handicap in co-operating with the underdeveloped countries. The traditional framework is breaking down everywhere. If you look down on Basle from an aeroplane, you see a great urban area stretching away in every direction, towards France, Germany, and the neighbouring cantons. If you try to pick out the sovereign canton of Basle with its sovereign people, you see that it is no more than the central area of a town which has overflowed on every side and even across the Swiss frontier.

Our expanding towns may seem modest in size when compared to New York or London or Paris, but they are already too big for the political framework of Switzerland. The Swiss economy is in a flourishing state—much too flourishing to fit in with the traditional life of the country. To fulfil her orders, Switzerland has had to employ foreign workers and since they now form more than one-tenth of the population, we are beginning to wonder if the resulting economic interdependence will not, in the long run, limit our freedom of action. At a time when few industrial proprietors, anywhere, are really "masters in their own houses," it is dangerous to become a proprietor-country. Fierce discussion is in progress about the attitude to be adopted towards European economic integration, which for many Swiss has become a sort of nightmare. But while we go on arguing as if we still had a choice, integration is taking place, day after day, imperceptibly and irreversibly, and cannot be halted by a refusal to take part in its organisation.

WE SEEM to be in a state of self-contradiction. Our desire to maintain our position in the economic race is constantly at variance with our political urge to stay as we are, or rather as we were. Economic structures determine political realities just as much as political structures determine economic realities. Anyone who takes the trouble to listen to what is going on around him will realise that this elaborate, balanced, and complex democratic machinery is beginning to seize up here and there. He will hear it said that people are no longer interested, that communal life is dwindling and disappearing, that professional trade unions are becoming more important than political parties, that federalism is being corrupted by the excessive amounts of money in the Federal exchequer, that young people pay no attention to public affairs, and that the average citizen is put off by the never-ending calls to vote.

It is true that, for many people, professional solidarity is more real than local or communal solidarity. The commune is no longer, inevitably, the framework within which life is lived, and in many cases it has ceased to be a coherent entity. The canton can no longer control or co-ordinate social and economic activities which extend beyond its boundaries. It is especially true that the traditional method of legislating by popular vote, which is a sort of obstacle race, was evolved at a time when laws were few in number, fundamental in import, and meant to last—whereas the modern state regulates everything, intervenes in all fields, and is continually legislating not in order to establish lasting rules of social behaviour, but in order to guide a process of perpetual change by means of temporary measures, evolved from day to day, and which should be decided on according to some less cumbersome and less solemn procedure.

I DO NOT WISH TO DRAW too black a picture. In spite of all this, the basic structure is sound, the existing institutions function, and the Confederation still manages to achieve the miracle of combining tendencies which, everywhere else, cause division or strife: the full exercise of popular sovereignty and efficiency of government; the unity of the state and the freedom of the individuals and communities belonging to it; loyalty to the commonwealth and the allegiance of each citizen to the religious or linguistic communities which link him with other nations; in short, general cohesion in spite of the diversity of the component parts.

But a living country is necessarily one which is undergoing a process of change, and institutions—particularly those which are so firmly rooted—alter more slowly than life does. When institutions are out of step with life, crises occur which may be considered as the growing pains of the countries concerned. In Switzerland, they relate to the sometimes illogical division of responsibilities between the communes, the cantons, and the Confederation; to the inadequate distinction between constitutional and legislative matters and bye-laws, which causes excessive voting on subordinate or futile questions; to the ambiguous functions and responsibilities of professional organisations in public life. Everyone is more or less aware of the fact

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that all these questions ought to be gone into and that further delay in making the necessary adaptation will produce a crisis in our institutions, which may coincide with a still more serious one in our relations with the changing world outside. In this case, we might find that certain solutions were thrust upon us.

So far, the crisis is more noticeable in our mental processes than in external fact, and it is difficult to define because it relates to our conception of our national life and of the part we have to play in the world. I have already pointed out that, fundamentally, the whole development of Swiss history has run counter to that of Europe and that by remaining a bastion of local and communal liberties, which have been modernised but not abandoned, Switzerland has been able to pass through the epochs of European absolutism, centralisation, and nationalism, without taking part in them.

I am still convinced that, all things considered, we can congratulate ourselves on this; but there is no doubt that it has left its mark. During the triumphant upsurge of frenzied, blood-thirsty, racialistic nationalism which culminated in the Second World War, Switzerland was like an island, cut off by the Fascist flood, and she retreated into herself so intensely, she clung so fervently to the values peculiar to her own history, that she has still not quite succeeded in emerging from her isolation. But she feels uneasy in this position, because she never conceived of her role as being purely conservative.

Until quite recently—at least up to the time of the League of Nations—we were often looked upon, and we tended to see ourselves, as a model scale for a future federation of nations. We had managed to ensure the harmonious co-habitation of German, French, and Italian populations within a single state, and foreigners were eager to know how we had done this. It is true that we had no recipe to offer. We could only point to our history, and it was so peculiar to us that it could be of no help to our neighbours, since they were unable to re-live their history along Swiss lines. Since then, people have given up asking us for the recipe, and we feel rather put out about this. We are even beginning to feel rather lonely, shut away inside a past which is too present, while all around us Europe is trying to shake off her dead past and to find a way towards unity.

Switzerland has taken no part in this new venture, and for a long time now she seems to have been looking on rather ungraciously. When the Congress of Vienna, almost a century-and-a-half ago, organised the balance of power in Europe, it proclaimed that the central, neutral position of Switzerland was in the interest of the whole Continent. To-day, when Europe is no longer a balance of great powers but a diminished and threatened peninsula which is seeking salvation in unity, we seem almost to be saying that the Continent should remain divided in order to allow us to remain neutral. And yet one has only to listen to the average Swiss commenting on world affairs or to read the many Swiss newspapers, great and small, to realise that neutral Switzerland is the least neutralist country in existence. The Swiss have no hesitation in taking sides and in criticising or applauding developments as they occur. It would be easy to make further apparently paradoxical statements in trying to explain the good, or not so good, reasons which account for Swiss reactions. But it is perhaps more useful to grasp the logic of abstention, which is no weaker and no less compelling than the logic of commitment. But it is perhaps more useful to show the fundamental logical causes which have so far prevented Switzerland from joining the European movement. They are at least as compelling as those working in favour of participation.

After World War I, and as a result of a popular vote which was hotly debated and produced only a small majority, Switzerland agreed to depart from her neutrality to the extent of joining the League of Nations, on the theoretically irrefutable ground that neutrality no longer had any moral justification in a Europe and a world united for the maintenance of peace. The experience proved to be disappointing. The League of Nations was a Victors' Club, whose members were already divided among themselves, and whose purpose was to maintain an international order based neither on force nor justice but uncomfortably balanced between the two. It was, in fact, no more than an armistice. We had had no share in the setting up of this order, nor had we anything to do with its destruction. Neither our presence nor our absence could in any way modify the inevitable consequences of situations and actions to which we were not a party. We learnt our lesson, and it was one of modesty rather than of selfishness.

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As a small country in the heart of Europe, we could do little more to further the salvation of the world than look to our own and do our best to preserve our country as an island, a refuge, and perhaps a meeting-place, outside the tumult. We also learned that the refusal to take part in internecine strife was not a symptom of moral indifference and that, far from being contrary to the principle of human solidarity, it was sometimes the only means of defending this principle, and the only one a small country could honourably adopt, as long as it had not been attacked itself.

It is true that history does not repeat itself but there are certain trends which, when once established, take a long time to correct. The trend which began in 1914 still exists. Again, after World War II, all the innovations that have taken place in the field of international affairs have been a result of that war, arising in the first place from the victorious alliance of powers and secondly from the conflicts between the former allies. The United Nations was a new Victors' Club, soon torn by dissensions; the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact were two factors which initiated the integration of Western Europe; the inextricable network of relationships and restrictions created by the agreements which step by step transformed occupied Western Germany into a stronghold of the Western Alliance.

Through all the tensions, confusions, disagreements, and switchings of alliances, European affairs have developed from a situation to which Switzerland was not a partner and according to the rules of a game she has never played. Since she was neither one of the heirs of the common victory nor involved in the splitting up of the allied camp into hostile blocs, she has been able to display her sympathies, propose her services, accept the position of observer/participant whenever it has been offered, and play a useful part in any undertaking which did not involve taking sides politically. She has been able to act as a generally benevolent neighbour, not as a full member. Nothing leads one to suppose that Switzerland, by remaining detached and outside the network of controversy, has done any disservice to her neighbours and the free world.

But there is no point in concealing the fact that it has also been to her own advantage. Her situation has not always been easy and one day may prove rather costly; that, however, is not the point. Causes, reasons, and consequences should not be confused: foreign capital has flowed into Switzerland because the country has tried to remain outside conflicts and political alignments; she has not made this effort with the aim of attracting foreign capital.

IT IS TRUE that in the terrible confusion (it has long befogged the question of European integration) between clearly defined plans for the creation of a great European economic zone and obscure pronouncements about the revival of "Carolingia," the great issues of political sovereignty have been mixed up with detailed haggling about the immediate material benefits which might accrue for a given group of interests through the setting up of a Common Market. After three years of false fears and false moves, which have brought Switzerland her share of disappointments, the confusion has now been dispelled. Between the Common Market and Switzerland, there is no really vital economic problem; Switzerland has never lived in an economic shell. But such a fundamentally particularist country will refuse—and if need be, by popular vote, since such a vote would be obligatory—to become involved, by way of an economic contract, in an undertaking which constantly proclaims itself to be political and demands unconditional adherence to its political aims without being able to define them. However, it is comparatively unimportant whether the choice is between Carolingia, *Fralit*, or the Atlantic Union. All of them amount to the Atlantic Pact, or a section of that Pact, and it would be more honest to demand membership of the Atlantic Alliance as a condition of entry to the Common Market. Although political union, European or otherwise, is not simply a matter of a military alliance, it supposes such an alliance. The squabbling between the supporters of the integrated market and those of the free-trade zone had gratuitously obscured the fundamental issues, but since those members of the Free Trade Association who were also members of the Atlantic Alliance have switched their allegiance, leaving the Swiss, the Austrians, and the Swedes high and dry and with nothing in common but their unwillingness or inability to fall into line, the distinction has become clear even to the most imperceptive Swiss minds.

Perhaps, sooner or later, the difference between a political bloc and the setting up of a great economic zone will be accepted in Brussels, but for this to happen, the political

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plan will no doubt have to begin taking shape. The Common Market, which its sceptical promoters thought of at the time of its inception as the first tentative outline or simulacrum of a political union long advocated but slow to materialise, has acquired its own impetus since it came into being, and this impetus needs no ideological justification other than the fact that it promotes expansion of the Common Market itself. The Market's force of attraction has become such that it is sweeping all the neighbouring economies into its orbit, and the negotiations about the entry of Great Britain will eventually show what changes and widening of perspectives this will involve, because the contradiction between the economic force of attraction and the political clannishness of exclusiveness can only become more marked. Will it be necessary to demand the liquidation of the Commonwealth, the last remnant of a world system which covered the five continents, so that only the United Kingdom proper is allowed to share in European expansion? Or will it prove possible to break away from that equivocal political geometry which marks out an economic area according to the supposed dimensions of a federal pact? And to preserve the cohesion of the central core, will the founder governments revive the original idea of political union, approach the problem directly and, without using the economic lever, evolve the common political institutions they say they want?

ONLY WHEN THIS DECISION has been taken will it be possible to distinguish between the political and economic issues, which have so far been confused in such a way as to obstruct all discussion. The settlement of political issues will then no longer be left to customs officials and statesmen will give up trying to create a United Europe through the organisation of the cattle marts. While it is obvious that a political union will *also* have its distinct economic limits and basis, it will not need to retract in order to define itself nor will it find any advantage in limiting its area of expansion and economic attraction to the boundaries of a political pact.

As far as Switzerland's attitude to European integration is concerned, the fundamental question was whether it would be possible to have a form of association without being committed in advance to the, as yet, uncertain policies and structures of a political bloc still in the making. The question related in the first place to Switzerland's connections with the rest of the world, but was also prompted by the desire not to submit the pluralist, particularist system of direct democracy, as it exists in the Swiss microcosm, to the more summary procedures likely to be taken by European legislatures. All other issues are subordinate to this one, and once this question has been settled—or shown to be irrelevant—the problem of association, that is of finding a *modus vivendi*, can be debated at length, fiercely and in detail, as it ought to be, without constant references to Holy Europe or William Tell. Around its central core, Europe will have room for neighbours.

IT STILL remains true, however, that there is a psychological uneasiness in Switzerland, of which the "integration scare" was only a symptom; it seems very much like a fear of the future. We have changed a great deal. Not long ago, we were fond of expounding our traditions and institutions, and we felt we were teaching others the proper way to live; if they would only listen to us, the world would be a better place.... Now we feel—with humility or exasperation—the need to explain ourselves in order to make other people understand why we are so attached to a particular way of life, which just happens to be ours. We realise the necessity for vast groupings of countries; we see that the world is moving towards the interdependence of all peoples and that the era of absolute national sovereignty is drawing to a close. What future will there be, in the new world now being born, for the small state with the peculiar forms of communal freedom and autonomy to which we are so attached? To safeguard our heritage, must we continue to go against the stream of history?

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, I do not think that our melancholy or irritation is justified. It is undoubtedly true that the classical conception of the sovereignty of states is becoming more and more of a fiction in an organised and interdependent world where massive means of extermination have abolished the "right of war" as a way of fulfilling national aims, which was the old criterion of national sovereignty. However, this classical sovereignty is being lost by the great countries as well as by the small, and the loss is not most striking in the case of the small countries. It is certainly true that the world of the future will be a world of great groups. But even now, when the two gigantic blocs are facing each other, not only do we see

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the old Empires declining but also signs of disintegration in the great new blocs themselves. Tiny, rebellious vassal states cheekily and successfully defy the monolithic giants, and it already seems a long time since "non-aligned" countries were considered as being beyond the pale. During the last few years, new states have come into being at an average rate of one per month, and most of them have a smaller population and a more limited economic and military potential than Switzerland, and the small countries have never been so numerous and active as they are to-day. Why should this development be looked upon only as a form of "balkanisation," a proliferation of flimsy and illusory sovereignties, to be accounted for by the tension between the two blocs?

It should be seen for what it is; a great many small countries have won independence and are now learning with difficulty how to live up to it. The historical trend seemed to be towards a division of the world into two blocs, until such time as one bloc would prevail, but this movement has been reversed.

History is not a single stream whose currents run all in one direction. The world may be tending towards unification, but it is also straining with all its will-power towards ensuring the autonomy even of the smallest communities, and the two tendencies are not necessarily contradictory. The whole of Swiss history bears witness to the fact that after long centuries of anarchy and violent conflict it has been possible, in one small area, to reconcile unity and diversity, general cohesion and local autonomy of the component parts. It was the successful achievement of this synthesis which caused the French historian, Elie Halévy, to say in 1913, just before the beginning of the catastrophe, that Europe was faced with the choice between "a universal Swiss Republic and bellicose Cæsarism." We ourselves are no longer quite so sure of the universal value of our scale model, which is so satisfying for our local pride. But was the forecast fundamentally wrong, and have we ceased to believe in our own lessons?

IT COULD BE that Europe, having survived two wars, is now groping, in other ways and on a larger scale, towards a comparable synthesis. She must re-discover federalism, if she is to unite without destroying her genius. Instead of showing mistrust, we should co-operate positively. Starting from radically different situations and moving from opposite directions but converging towards the same points, both the free world and the totalitarian world, as we call them, seem obliged to look for forms of organisation transcending both the fragmentation into sovereign or pseudo-sovereign states and the tyranny of a single authority.

No doubt, the age we live in does not encourage easy optimism, and any opinion about the future is subject to the proviso: if mankind survives. But if it does survive, there is every reason to believe that it will always be looking for a social order that is both acceptable and human.

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau

By Bertrand de Jouvenel

ROUSSEAU had a profound impact upon the way of life of the late 18th century: thanks to him many parents became aware of and attentive to their children; he fostered enjoyment of natural beauties and contributed to a change in the style of gardening; he was instrumental in shifting the manner of personal relationships from polite restraint to excessive demonstrativeness; with a lag of a generation his political views fired Robespierre; with an even greater lag his Socinian religiosity was to pervade the 19th century. It would be hard to find another writer whose suggestions have proved effective so extensively.

Strangely enough, however, the very core of Rousseau's doctrine has been almost entirely disregarded. But is it so strange? In this respect, Rousseau was not only intellectually ahead of his day, but also he was affectively in direct opposition to the trend of his time, which has developed ever since. Rousseau is the first great exponent of social evolution. His was the first attempt to depict systematically the historical progress of human society: here he comes a full century before Engels and all the others who were to make the evolution of human society a popular theme. His concern to mark out stages of social development and to bring out the factors which he deemed effective in the process, is impressive against the background of contemporary writings. Everybody was then talking about Progress but in a very loose manner, and Rousseau was the only one who thought of it as a process to be understood. Now the first author who offered an understanding of what everybody talked about should have been praised to the skies on that score. This, on the contrary, is what brought Rousseau the enmities which made the last part of his life a misery.

Rousseau attempting to place the manuscript of the *Dialogues* on the master-altar of Notre-Dame, because that then seemed to him the only chance of ensuring that his protest against his persecutors should reach posterity.... Rousseau balked in his attempt and wandering through the streets of Paris, clutching his justification, in despair because there is no one he can trust to procure its posthumous publication. . . . Rousseau standing at street-corners, distributing leaflets copied in his own hand, which are spurned by passers-by... here are images which move us to pity, yet we feel that such conduct is pathological. Also when we read the *Dialogues*, we feel that Rousseau is mainly the victim of his disordered imagination. I said "mainly," not "solely." However much he exaggerated it, the evidence seems to me convincing that there was a continuing systematic attempt on the part of the *Philosophes* to discredit him. A war of derisive *bon mots* and ridiculous anecdotes was waged upon him which his own disposition made easy and which his sensitivity made effective. It will not do to plead that the *Philosophes* reacted without wilful malice to his being a "difficult" person: they treated him as a dangerous man, and took advantage of his being difficult, making him ever so more so by their expert teasing, finally driving him to desperate isolation.

BUT WHY DID THESE lovers of Progress regard as dangerous the first systematic exponent of social evolution? For a solid and weighty reason: because Rousseau, while sketching evolution

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with a keen pencil, also painted it in dark colours. The *Philosophes* fought the Church, which they regarded as a restraining hand upon Progress, but an ever weakening hand. What if they now found standing in their path, coming from their own ranks, a new enemy, a voice warning against the dangers of Progress? To this challenger applied *a fortiori* the war-cry: *"Écrasons l'infâme!"* Rousseau points out that the *Philosophes*, having proved powerful enough to drive the Jesuits out of France,[1] found it child's play to get rid of a single inconvenient individual.[2]

In a concise recapitulation of his doctrine, Rousseau provides the key to the enmity of the *Philosophes*. A speaker is supposed to sum up the lessons he has drawn from a second painstaking reading of all Rousseau's works: "I saw throughout the development of his great principle that nature has made man happy and good but that society corrupts him and causes his misery. Take the *Émile*, much read but much misunderstood; it is nothing other than a treatise on the spontaneous goodness of man, meant to show how vice and error, foreign to his constitution, invade it from outside and deteriorate it progressively. In his first writings, he is more concerned to destroy the delusive prestige which causes us to admire stupidly the very means of our misery, and he seeks to correct this false valuation which causes us to honour mischievous talents and to despise beneficial virtues. Everywhere he shows us mankind better, wiser, and happier in its primitive constitution; blind, miserable, and nasty as it moves away from it. His goal is to correct the error of our judgments in order to check the progress of our vices."

It is easy to understand how exasperating the *Philosophes* must have found so pessimistic a view of Progress. It is also easy to understand that, during two centuries of accelerating Progress, admirers of Rousseau were prone to cast Noah's mantle upon what they regarded as an absurdity of their hero. But whether absurd or not, a doctrine which a great author explicitly states to be the essence of his message can not be glossed over without a consequent misreading of his works. The respect due to the author requires that his books be read in the light of what he himself names as his central concept.

The Deterioration of Democracy

THIS DAWNED upon me many years ago, while studying the *Social Contract*, when I found it to be, not a hopeful prescription for a Republic to come, but a clinical analysis of political deterioration. It is hard to misconceive what Rousseau meant when he himself summarised it:

> The principle which constitutes the various forms of Government is to be found in the number of members which compose it. The lesser this number the stronger this Government; the greater this number, the weaker the Government; and as sovereignty tends ever to loosen, the Government tends to reinforce itself. Thus the executive must in time overpower the legislative; and when Law is finally subjected to men, there remain only masters and slaves; the State is destroyed.
>
> Before such destruction, the Government must, by its natural progress, change its form, and pass by degrees from the greater number to the lesser.[3]

This summary turns our attention to Book III, chap. I of the *Contract*, where Rousseau offers what would now be called "a dynamic model of political transformation." While men should be active partners in the formulation of the public interest and voluntary agents thereof in private capacity, Rousseau asserts that such active partnership declines as the number of citizens increases, that individual conducts are increasingly inspired by divergent particular interests, that the role and pressure of Government must therefore develop; that, as the governmental apparatus grows, authority therein must be more concentrated; that, in sum the more numerous the

[1] Rousseau describes the conflict of the *Philosophes* with the Jesuits as "a duel of power like that of Rome with Carthage." He says: "These two bodies, equally domineering, equally intolerant, were therefore incompatible since each was committed to despotic rule; they could not reign together, they were mutually exclusive. The newcomer, following covertly the tactics of the older, managed to supersede it, by divesting it of its ancient allies, thanks to whose about-face the new destroyed the old. But already we see the new body repeating the behaviour of the old with the same boldness and greater success since the older had ever met with resistance while the new meets with none. Its intolerance is better hidden but no less cruel: its rigour is not so apparent because it has no rebels to contend with. But let there be some true defenders of theism, tolerance, and morality, we would not fail to see against them the rise of a philosophic inquisition." *Troisième Dialogue*, XXII, 175.

[2] Rousseau claims that this happened to him: "Since the philosophic sect has gathered itself into a body under leaders, these, thanks to the art of intrigue to which they have applied themselves, have become the rulers of public opinion, and thereby are masters of private reputations, indeed can determine the fate of private lives, and of the State itself. They tried their new-found power upon J.-J. and the extent of their success, which must have come as a surprise even to them, gave them the measure of their credit." p. 171.

[3] *Lettres Écrites de la Montagne*. Sixth Letter, XII, 176.

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people, the smaller the number of rulers. These rulers exert a heavier control over subjects, while they are ever less answerable to the citizenry:

> A (governing) body which acts all the time can not render account of each action; it renders account only of the more important, and soon it may render account of none. The more active the acting Power, the less important the Power that wills.[4] . . . Thus perish in the end all Democratic States.[5]

In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau offered no recipe for turning the government of a large and complex society into a democracy: on the contrary, he offered a demonstration that on the one hand great numbers, on the other the requirement of great activity in Government inevitably led to the centralisation of political authority in a few hands, which he regarded as the opposite of Democracy. Quite early, Rousseau had expressed alarm about plans for the radical reconstruction of the French political system,[6] and in the *Dialogues* designed for posthumous publication he complained bitterly:

> His object could not be to bring back large population and big States to the initial simplicity but only to arrest, if possible, the progress of those small and isolated enough for their preservation from the perfection of Society and the deterioration of the species. . . . But the bad faith of men of letters and that silly vanity which forever persuades everyone that he is being thought of, caused great nations to apply to themselves what was meant for small Republics; and, perversely, one wished to see a promoter of subversion and troubles in the man who is most prone to respect national laws and constitutions, and who has the strongest aversion for revolution, and for *ligueurs* of all kind, who return the compliment.[7]

Urbanisation

IT IS PERHAPS characteristic that the instance which immediately comes to our minds when we think of the purest democracy, Athens, found no favour in the eyes of Rousseau. Not only does he disparage it by comparison with Sparta in the *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts*, but speaking of a political incident in Geneva, he exclaims in a private letter: "Here are these misguided people making great strides in imitation of the Athenians, and thus racing towards the same fate, which they shall encounter soon enough without running to it."[8] Why this low valuation of Athens? "With all this, never was Greece, excepting Sparta alone, given as an example of good mores."[9] Since Athens was lacking in mores and not a good example of democracy, the two things are linked in Rousseau's mind, and linked to the urban character of Athens. Note that when he pictures his assembly of the people, he mentions peasants: "When in the happiest people, we see peasants gathered under an oak to transact public business and acquitting themselves always wisely, can we fail to despise the refinements of other nations which achieve their fame and misery with so much art?"[10]

Democracy sits well with a sturdy peasantry and perishes through the riff-raff of the big town (*Contract*, Bk. IV, chap. IV). "Men were not designed to live in ant-heaps. . . . The closer you pack them the more they spoil. . . . Towns are the sink of the human species."[11] "The happiest of all conditions," states Rousseau, "is that of a villager in a free State."[12] Now we have moved on from Rousseau's political views to his social views, quite naturally since they are closely connected.

Of course, in our day the most "advanced" countries are characterised in terms of occupational statistics by having a quite small proportion of their man-power in agriculture. The proportion is very large on the contrary in the "under-developed" countries, and, quite currently, the rate at which the land cedes manpower to the town is taken as a rough measure of the rate of progress. Here then we have a

[4] The Power that wills: in Rousseau's scheme the People itself.

[5] *Montagne*, Seventh Letter, XII, 186.

[6] See *Jugement sur la Polysynodie de l'Abbé de Saint-Pierre* (1756, published posthumously 1782) in Vaughan I, 415–16: "The mere introduction of suffrage was bound to cause a fearsome upheaval and to foster continual and convulsive agitation of social fractions rather than infuse new vigour into the whole. Picture the danger of setting into motion the enormous masses which make up the kingdom of France. Who shall control the consequent agitation or foresee all the effects of which it is capable? Even if the advantages of the new plan were clear, would any sensible man undertake to abolish the old customs, to discard the old maxims and to give another form to the State than that to which it has come by degrees over thirteen centuries?"

[7] *Troisième Dialogue*, XXI, 129–130. The word *ligueurs* refers of course to the Ligue under Henri III, and to the violent agitation caused by the faction which then brought disorder to France. See also the *Dedicace* of *Inegalité*: "When the people have once been accustomed to masters, they cannot henceforth do without them. If they try to shake the yoke, they move further from liberty as they mistake for it a frenzy of licence which stands in direct opposition to it: thus their revolutions almost always deliver them into the hands of seducers who but add to their chains."

[8] Letter to Moultou, April 6, 1770

[9] *Lettre à D'Alembert sur les Spectacles*, XI, 222.

[10] *Social Contract*, Book IV, chap. I.

[11] Emile, Book I, VII, 45–6.

[12] *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Part V, Letter II, V 200.

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stark contrast between Rousseau's view of human welfare and that which is current among us.

For Rousseau, "the condition natural to man is to till the soil and live from the fruits thereof ... this occupation is the only necessary one and the most useful: it is an unhappy estate only when others tyrannise it by their violence or seduce it by the example of their vices."[13] The "agriculture" which Rousseau has in mind is of course not "the food factory" producing essentially for the market, but it is the "subsistence farm" whereby the farming family is self-sufficient and then produces some surplus to support a small minority of non-farmers. Those who tyrannise the peasant, interfering with the natural happiness of his condition, are of course the "privileged classes" which levy too heavy a tribute upon him: and presumably Rousseau would have seen also as tyrannical the levy on peasants for the sake of "socialist industrialisation." But the happiness of the peasant is not jeopardised only by levies, but also by the temptation of the town: "Both the more substantial and the poorer peasants have the mania of sending their children into the towns, the former to make them students on their way to becoming gentlemen, the others to make them wage-earners...." It comes as something of a shock to the reader of 1962 that Madame de Wolmar's great maxim should be to do all that is possible towards the happiness of peasants, but to lend no hand towards individual promotion out of that condition. It is indeed stressed that the distribution of talents among men is independent of the class into which they are born: why then should the talents from the peasant class not be helped to positions consonant with their gifts? Because mores and happiness are the major considerations. Rousseau does not deny that promoting a man to a position wherein he can make full employment of his talent is to the advantage of Society but, he stresses, men should not be considered as "instruments," and therefore one should not so distribute employments as to put the best man in the place where he can be most efficient, but so as to put men in positions where they can be as good and happy as possible: "it is never permissible to deteriorate a human soul for the benefit of others."

NOTHING PERHAPS IS SO FOREIGN to the attitude of 1962 as Rousseau's view of the peasantry. A hasty reader must regard it as fantastically conservative: it is conservative from the angle of economics, since he advocates the preservation of a form of production, subsistence farming, which is inimical to economic development; moreover it is socially conservative since he does not want to afford the gifted individuals opportunities for promotion out of this condition! But Rousseau never pretended to be interested in economic and social development. Repeatedly he stated that his purpose was to reverse our valuations. Throughout history, peasants have been the despised basis upon which the social pyramid has been reared: there have been a few exceptions to this "rule of contempt," such as early Rome, the pioneer age of the U.S., the simpler Swiss *cantons*. These are the social systems of which Rousseau approves. If peasants are exploited and spurned, then of course they cannot be happy and contented, but a society made up of peasant families would be a virtuous and contented Society. This Arcadian dream already lies at the core of the *Discours des Sciences et des Arts*.

This does not imply that men should remain ignorant of skills other than those of agriculture. There is a picture in the *Lettre à D'Alembert sur Genève* of a happy society in the neighbourhood of Neufchâtel: here equally spaced farms display the equality of land possessions of the farmers, and afford the inhabitants the advantages of privacy together with the benefits of society. These happy peasants are all in favourable circumstances, free from any levies, dues or taxes, they each live from their own produce; however they have leisure to display their natural creative genius in many handiworks, especially in the winter, each family isolated by snow in the nice house built by its own hands practises many arts which are both pleasurable and useful. "No carpenter, locksmith [etc.] ever entered the country; they have no need of specialised craftsmen, each is his own craftsman.... Indeed they even make watches; and, incredible as it may seem, each united in his own person the various professions which watchmaking, and its very tooling, seem to require."

The last phrase irresistibly suggests the contrast of Adam Smith's opening remarks: a pin is a simple object, yet many men are assembled to make it, and its manufacture is subdivided into "about eighteen different operations." Adam Smith eulogises this massing of hands and sub-division of tasks in the production of a simple object: this is the diametrically opposite position from that of Rousseau who rejoices that a complicated object is made by a single man. Surely Rousseau would have conceded to Smith that division of labour was more efficient and led to higher production, but he would have argued that the Neufchâtel procedure made the worker a happier and a better man.

[13] *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Part V, Letter II.

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The contrast with Adam Smith gives us a key to Rousseau's thinking: he cared little for efficiency, which has been ever more highly valued in the course of the two centuries elapsed. It is in terms of efficiency that we can call ourselves greatly superior to the men of 1762; it is by means of efficiency that we enjoy many goods and possibilities they lacked. The great "success story" of the West is the Story of Efficiency, our élites are efficiency élites, our new wisdom consists in efficient processes and maxims of efficiency. It is in that form, and in that form only, that the "wisdom of the West" is eagerly accepted throughout the world. As we shall see, Rousseau's "advice to an under-developed nation" stands in sharp opposition to ours.

What is the mainspring of Rousseau's contempt for efficiency? He understands that increasing mastery over Nature implies increasing material interdependence of men: this he regards as corrupting. His great concern is to promote a condition of mutual friendship. He considers the thesis according to which a practical equivalent is obtained when each man is moved, for his own personal advantage to serve that of his fellows, and he forcibly rejects this equivalence.[14] Not only is the feeling for the neighbour utterly different in quality if he is regarded as a means to services, however mutual, but it is not true that on this personal advantage basis, harmony will be achieved. On the contrary there will be in each man a propensity to feel that he is not getting as good a bargain as he should. Man feels less at home in his work if its nature and discipline are imposed, directly or not, by his fellows, and more dissatisfied with its proceeds, if these seem determined at the discretion of his fellows. Thus Rousseau sees in the division of labour, not the proceeds thereof, but feelings arising therefrom: unfreedom, frustration, and resentment.

Advice to an Under-developed Nation

NOWADAYS we quantify Progress. We evaluate in current prices the sum of goods and services produced in a nation in a given year, and then measure against this the flow in some succeeding year, making corrections for price changes: this calculation, put on a per year and per inhabitant basis, yields us the per capita rate of growth, which we commonly identify with rate of progress. Also we use the "flow of goods and services per year" concept to compare the National Product per head in various countries and then we can place these countries on a graduated scale with India at the bottom and the U.S. at the top. It is indeed in terms of position on this graduated scale that we define "under-developed countries": in the case of the latter we deem it mandatory that they should adopt the policies and structures apt to move them up the scale at the fastest feasible pace.

In Rousseau's day there was no pressure of population problem and therefore we cannot presume to say what his view would have been in the case of the countries so afflicted. But taking the case of, say, African countries, it seems quite clear from his writings that he would not have advocated the imitation of the Western economy. He would have said that maximising the flow of goods and service was a purpose different in kind from fostering a virtuous and happy community, and that his own purpose was the latter. Nothing is more telling in this respect than his advice on the political and social reformation of Poland. In his day Poland was an "under-developed country," lacking the administration, industry, and trade of the western kingdoms, although it possessed a cultural élite (which is also the case of a good number of now "under-developed" nations).

> If you only want to become noisome, brilliant, formidable, and to make your weight felt to the other peoples of Europe, then follow their example. Cultivate the sciences, the arts, trade, industry, have a regular army, fortresses, academies, above all a good financial system which stirs up the circulation of money; make money indispensable to everyone in order to increase social dependence and toward that end foster material and intellectual luxury. . . .
>
> But if perchance you should prefer to shape a free, peaceful, and wise nation, self-sufficient and happy, then you should take quite another path, maintain or re-establish at home simple mores, healthy tastes, a martial spirit devoid of ambition, form courageous and disinterested souls, apply your people to agriculture and to the arts basic to living, make money despicable. . . .[15]

In those days the suggestions of the French way of life had perhaps an even stronger "demonstration effect" than in our day the American way of life. This is what Rousseau feels about social imitation:

> A great nation which has never been too intimately mixed with its neighbours must have many [civil and domestic customs] which are its very own, but which are presumably being adulterated, due to the general bent throughout Europe towards the adoption of French tastes and mores. You should maintain or re-establish any ancient custom of yours, and indeed introduce some which shall be specific to yourselves. Even if such specific customs are in themselves of no value, even if they are somewhat bad, provided they are not essentially so, their very difference is of value as tying the Poles more

[14] Cf. *Préface* of *Narcisse* (1752) XV.

[15] *Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne*, chap. XI.

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> closely together and giving them a natural reluctance to mix with foreigners. I regard it as a boon that they have a national style of clothing. Carefully maintain this advantage: do exactly the reverse of that much vaunted Czar [Peter the Great]. Let neither king nor senator nor any public man ever appear in any other raiment than the national, let no Pole dare to produce himself at court in clothing of French style.

Keen to foster patriotism, Rousseau conceives it as an attachment to and pride in what is specific to the nation. Obviously he would have applauded the resurrection of Gaelic in Eire and of Hebrew in Israel. In contradiction to Voltaire's hatred of the Jews, Rousseau expressed the utmost admiration for their conservation of the national character throughout their ordeals.

> Out of these vagabonds Moses dared to make a political body, a free people; while this herd wandered in the desert he instituted it in a manner invulnerable to time, mishaps, and conquerors, which the passage of five thousand years has neither destroyed nor altered, and which subsists in its pristine vigour even while the nation has ceased to form a body politic.
>
> To prevent his people from melting into others, he gave it mores and customs incompatible with those of other nations; he burdened it with specific rites and ceremonies, he introduced a thousand constraints to keep it on the alert and to make it forever a stranger to other peoples; and all the bonds of brotherhood which he created between its citizens were as many obstacles to its absorption in other peoples.

Rousseau goes on to glorify the Jewish nation which shall subsist as such to the end of the world, whatever the persecutions.

The mere quoting of Peter the Great as a model of what should not be done suffices to stress that Rousseau deliberately advanced the view opposed to that the *Philosophes*. They all thought highly of Peter's efforts to "westernise" the Russian people; indeed in his day they were enamoured of Catherine the Great, who was pursuing the same object, denounced by Rousseau. Jean-Jacques' position here is consistent with the more general and extreme statement he made twenty years earlier in the preface to *Narcisse*:

> Everything which facilitates communication between the several nations carries to each not the virtues but the vices of another, and alters in all the mores suitable to its climate and constitution.

Again his attitude is opposed to that of the Philosophers, and to the modern attitude, in terms of administration. They were all in favour of centralisation: he stands against it. He would like to see Poland "a confederation of thirty-three small States." This fully accords with his desire to involve all citizens in public affairs,[16] and with his finding that the proportion of those so involved declines as membership of the body politic increases. It seems strange that Rousseau should have been invoked as patron by the centralising Jacobins.

Political confederation rather than unification, limited rather than universal suffrage, systematic cultivation of national traits rather than westernisation, self-sufficiency rather than foreign trade, rural life rather than urbanisation, taxes in kind rather than in money, subsistence agriculture associated with cottage crafts rather than farming for the market and establishment of industrial complexes—at every point Rousseau's advice to the Poles stands in contradiction to that which is now currently given to under-developed countries.

Viewpoint

UNDERGRADUATES find it easy to think that Rousseau's views were "advanced" in their day, and have become "reactionary" in our own, due to the march of Progress. This will not do. At every point at which it clashes with now prevalent views, Rousseau's doctrine conflicted in his own day with the views of the *Philosophes*. It is in conflict with developments which have occurred because it was conceived in opposition to developments due to occur.

An analogy immediately comes to mind: Plato pictured his small, closed, self-sufficient City while he was well aware that Greek cities were being swept into larger wholes. Rousseau's recommendations now seem Utopian, but he knew them for such at the time. He sensed the accelerating pace of social evolution, but chose to dwell on what was being lost rather than on what was being gained. No doubt we can read in his works the bitter condemnation of the society he lived in, but in the name of a better past, not of a better future. His attitude is fundamentally pessimistic: the course of social

[16] All citizens does not mean all adult inhabitants. If we were here dealing with the politics of Rousseau, we would have to stress what he says in chaps. VI and XIII of *Pologne*, where he warns against a sweeping abolition of bondage, stresses that liberty is a heady wine for those unaccustomed to it, who are more apt to mutiny than fit for citizenship. He recommends a slow and progressive course of emancipation. Provincial committees would sit every two years to single out families deserving by their moral behaviour of access into the civic body. When a sufficient number of families came, after a number of sessions, to be in full enjoyment of citizenship rights, then villages where such families were numerous would be collectively enfranchised.

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history cannot be reversed or indeed stopped, except in isolated cases.[17]

This pessimism explains the contradiction which has so often been noted between the *Social Contract* and *Émile*. The man of the *Contract* is essentially a patriot, while *Émile* is educated for a life of privacy: the *Contract* is offered as the recipe which can preserve small rustic communities from deterioration, while also describing the process of their inevitable corruption; *Émile* is offered as advice to the inhabitant of a corrupted society, who should as far as feasible avoid involvement. The *Contract* is for Corsica, *Émile* for a Frenchman.

But why does Rousseau regard social evolution with such horror? His enemies were wont to say that, having gained fame through a clever paradox, he had lacked the wit to extricate himself from it, and that the joker's mask had helped to mould the philosopher's face; but this is the sort of stupidity of which clever men become capable when obfuscated by unkindness. Rousseau replies with dignity: "His system may be false, but in its development he has painted himself truly." Jean-Jacques has left us in no doubt about his main personal need: it is to feel at peace with himself and in trusting harmony with his fellows. It seemed to him that these basic needs of the human heart were increasingly thwarted by social evolution.

A century earlier, Hobbes had written in *Leviathan*: "Felicity is a continual progress of the desire from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter.... The *power* of a man, to take it universally, is his present means to obtain some future apparent good. And therefore, man's desire moving from one object to another.... I put for a general inclination of all mankind a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death.... Competition of riches, honour, command, or other power, inclineth to contention, enmity, and war...."

These simple quotations suffice to evoke a questing and contentious being. Rousseau in *Inégalité* adopts this picture without reservation: "Indeed men are nasty, a sad and ceaseless experience is enough proof." But he swings the Hobbesian model right around: according to Hobbes, and according to Bayle, man is naturally avid, and therefore violent when he is crossed, but education and society tame him. Rousseau wants it the other way around: but "Man is naturally good"; he asserts it, believes that he has proved it, he feels it within himself:[18] man therefore must have deteriorated. "What can have depraved him other than the changes intervening in his constitution, the progress he has made, the knowledge that he has acquired? Admire if you will human society, it is no less true that, of necessity, it leads men to hate each other proportionateiy to the criss-crossing of their interests."

The seventeenth century had seen in Society mainly the mutual guarantee; more realistically the eighteenth century takes social co-operation as the *fons et origo*. This practically beneficial co-operation is morally corrupting, says Rousseau, because it arouses our imagination. While *in conditione naturali*, man's desires are limited; in the state of society, having others at hand to help him, he can dream up ends achievable if others sufficiently connive at his purpose, and having enjoyed such achievement in imagination, he then feels unhappy and resentful if others in fact do not help him to it. Nor is this to be thought of mainly in material terms.[19] The individual good which social commerce endows with a very high value is "consideration"; the individual learns to see himself through others' eyes, and suffers if he is not looked up to as much as he wants, as much as another: and however efficient society may become in multiplying material goods, esteem, being assessed relatively, is by nature a scarce good, which all come to desire and but few can enjoy. The greater social co-operation is, the higher the prospects it offers to the individual who takes his Ego as the centre, and the more bitter his disappointment when the others fail to treat him as the centre.

Thus he finds himself shifting from the unexacting selfishness of the natural condition to the demanding selfishness of the social condition, the more demanding, the more extensive and intensive the social co-operation is. In a small rustic society it is possible to shift the individual's intense *Ego* concern to a *We* concern,[20] but it requires that the community be

[17] "But human nature does not move backwards, and never can we return to times of innocence and equality once we have departed from them: this is one of the principles which he most stressed. Therefore his aim could not be to bring back large nations and big States to their pristine simplicity, but only to arrest if possible the progress of those whose smallness and seclusion had preserved them from marching rapidly towards the perfection of society and the deterioration of the species."—*Troisième Dialogue*, XXII.

[18] He regards himself as "the man of Nature" and goes to the embarrassing extreme of stating: "I who feel better and more just than any man known to me...." *Troisième Dialogue*, XXII.

[19] Therefore it is incapable of being remedied by a social policy of equal material shares.

[20] This is the "recipe" of the *Social Contract*, fully explained in psychological terms at the beginning of *Émile*.

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small and immutable. It cannot be done in a large, progressive society, and it is mere fancy in the case of the *societas humani generis*.[21] Therefore, given the large progressive society, the best that can be done is to so educate the individual as to deflate foolish desires. Émile shall make no bid for a large share or a high place at the social banquet, but seek happiness within himself, in domestic life and the quiet enjoyment of Nature. While the ecstasy of the Lake of Bienne is perforce a rare event, life can be well spent in a pleasant retreat with charitable attention to a very narrow circle of neighbours.[22] There is probably great symbolic value in Wolmar's garden with its closed horizon and its moderate re-arrangement of Nature.[23] There is rather unexpected *rapprochement* here with the final sentence of *Candide*. However this calls for some curbing not only of lower appetites but also of finer feelings (witness Julie).

I DID NOT PROPOSE here to discuss the ideas of Rousseau. What I wanted to do is to display their consistency, which appears as soon as one envisages them from the centre which Rousseau many times indicates as his own: the search for "a true system of the human heart." Whether Rousseau found the "true" system is not my concern. But it is surely a singular merit to have considered the affective needs of Man. While the adoption of Rousseau's practical recommendations would have stopped us from progressing as we have done in the satisfaction of human material wants, our very advance on the road he so bitterly spurned quickens our sensitivity to the problems he raised.

[21] See the "suppressed" chapter of the *Social Contract*.

[22] "A small number of mild and peaceful people united by mutual needs and a reciprocity of goodwill concur by various occupations to a common end; each finding in his condition the means of his contentment, and without desire of rising from it, has no other ambition than to properly fulfil its duties." *Héloïse*, Part V, Letter II.

Compare at the beginning of *Émile*: "Distrust these cosmopolitans to seek afar in their books duties which they disdain to fulfil in their neighbourhood. See this philosopher who loves the Tartars dispense himself from loving his neighbours!"

[23] An important page (*Héloïse*, Part II, Letter XI). In general I feel that *Héloïse* has been inadequately exploited for the understanding of Rousseau as a social philosopher.

Folding Chairs

How sad these changes are.
People unscrew the nameplates from the doors,
take the saucepan of cabbage
and heat it up again, in a different place.

What sort of furniture is this
that advertises departure?
People take up their folding chairs
and emigrate.

Ships laden with homesickness and the urge to vomit
carry patented seating contraptions
and their unpatented owners
to and fro.

Now on both sides of the great ocean
there are folding chairs;
how sad these changes are.

Günter Grass

Translated by Michael Hamburger

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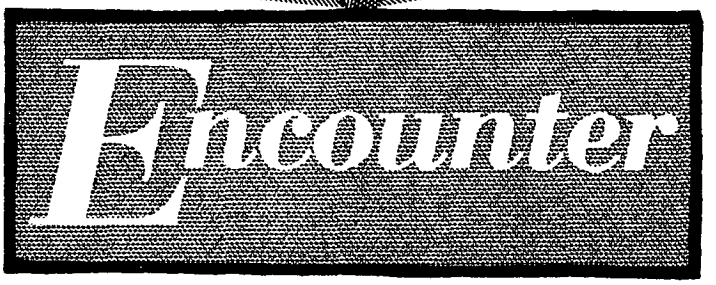
Give



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THEATRE

"And Thou Beside Me Singing . . ."

By Nigel Dennis

As the years pass, Ibsen looks less and less like a dedicated porcupine and more and more like a headstrong chameleon. Where once he was obliged to carry banners and perform duties of the highest sort of reformation, he seems now to behave in a sly and extremely shameless manner—like the vindictive organiser of huge processions who leads everyone on a dignified march and then, disappearing suddenly, pops up somewhere in the ranks to give the weary marchers a sudden hot foot or put clowns' hats on their heads. The real joke about this alarming change in his character is that it is not a change at all; it is what Ibsen always insisted that his character was. His letters and public statements are full of warnings and instructions to which we have never paid the least attention, preferring, as always, to make the author suit the image we wish to see him have: in this work of fantasy, the dramatist becomes our raw material and we become his playwrights. This is never pleasing to the dramatist, who always sees our creative act as an expression of wilful ignorance and stupidity which may well prove fatal to him: his answer, almost always, is to behave almost vindictively towards the public image of himself and to punish those who have erected it by doing nasty things at the foot of it and scrawling *graffiti* over its high-minded inscriptions. But once a dramatist has achieved a loyal following—all marching along behind a blown-up photograph of somebody whom the dramatist himself has either never seen in his life, or saw once when he was young and has regretted it ever since—it becomes a terrible job to try and shake it off, and authors are often driven to the most ridiculous extremes in their efforts to do so. Hailed as clergymen, they jump naked into public fountains; given flags, they put them to most improper use. The weaker of them soon succumb to the will of the people and spend the rest of their lives modelling themselves on the selves that have been modelled for them; in this they succeed so well that fact and fantasy at last become indistinguishable, and the public, satiated, chucks them into the ash-can as old bores and sets off after some more promising youngster.

The grimmer, tougher dramatists never succumb like this. They withdraw into ugly holes and plan horrible sorts of revenge. But these punitive schemes hardly ever work very well because they are, after all, merely the will of the people put into reverse—which is to say, their nature is dictated by that will and is not a free, personal choice. Numerous bad plays are the work of dramatists who cannot and will not surrender to their public image and retort by presenting an alternative that is even farther from the truth. Dramatists who respond often enough in this ineffectual way do, at last, succeed in losing their admirers—but, unfortunately, only because there is nothing left to admire.

In recent years, great attention has been paid to yet another way of foxing the hunt. Before the public has had a chance to knead a false image of the dramatist, the dramatist kneads one himself. This is the so-called "Mask" method of self-presentation, in which a mask of the phony face is not adjusted to the real face and left sticking there, but is carried on the author's left arm like a shield and waved violently at the threatening plebs, or smartly ducked behind when they run forward to press smoked meats and incense upon the wrong *persona*. This method makes immense demands upon the dramatist's energy, for much of his life must be spent covering his plainest appearance with a false grimace and bolstering up his own nonsense by making false statements about himself to newspapers or writing autobiographical caricatures to mislead his biographers. Moreover, this way of evading the pigeon-hole by being one's own stool-pigeon, of jumping the gun by shooting oneself, is not only a tax on the dramatist's energy but a bad example to younger dramatists, who are clever enough to grasp the trick but not wise enough to see through it. They start working on their masks long before they have developed any outstanding features,

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and, having once begun this fascinating pretence, become so interested in it that they have little time to spare for the creation of fictitious characters. We should be happy to jot down here the names of authors whom we feel have made this mistake in recent years, but limitations of space make this impossible.

IBSEN'S WAY IS UNDOUBTEDLY the canniest, the best, and the most laudable. One can hear him doing a lot of private swearing and cursing against the image that is being raised up outside the window; but this image is recognised by him as something that must be ignored—neither placated nor defied. He has moments when he spits at it with all the contempt he can find, but these are moments when he is standing on a platform, talking to a club, or making life difficult for an interviewer. That the spirit of revenge is active in him when he sits down to write, we cannot doubt; nor can we assert that he is immune to the incomparable pleasure of writing words that will give pain to those who love him most. But we never feel that such impulses will *decide* the nature of the play he is going to write: he will be glad to find room for them, but he will not allow them ever to crowd him out. What he has decided to write is a personal decision. It is a whim. It is a change from what he did before. It is the opposite of what he did last. It is interesting, because he has never tried it. It is, in short, another aspect of his own mind—a means of expression that he was unable to use in his last play because it was not suited to that play's tone and form. This is precisely why he wants to use it now—why he looked forward to using it, probably, even while he was busy with its predecessor. For it is the very stringencies and self-denials involved in one work that urge the mind on to a second work in which quite other limitations and controls will be required. And it is precisely this refreshment of the mind through change in its forms of exercise that is either ignored by the devoted followers (who refuse to admit that it has happened), or (if they do admit it) regarded as a shocking recantation.

In fact, there are no recantations in Ibsen. There is only a mind moving repeatedly from one point to another and finding stimulation only in repeated changes of stance and varying methods of examination. Ibsen himself usually uses one word to describe this kind of mental movement: he calls it "poetry." *Brand*, for example, he regards simply as a piece of poetry about a certain kind of man. He may, when pressed, say that this particular man is "myself in my best moments," but this is only a poet's description of the mental power he has had to provide in order to portray so great a character. "*Brand* is an æsthetic work, pure and simple," he writes, "and not a scrap of anything else. What it may have demolished, or built up, is not of the least concern to me. It came into existence in its time as the result of something I had lived *through*—not merely met in life; it was a necessity for me to rid myself, through poetic creation, of something I had inwardly finished with. And when by this means I had got quit of it, my book held for me no further interest."

So, at the very moment the public interest has been commanded, the very moment when all are engaged furiously both in *imagining* the dramatist and attaching his mind precisely to the things which have been demolished or built up by his work—at this very moment the dramatist himself has washed his hands entirely of the dramatist that did the work. He has written a poem on the theme: "All or nothing": now, that theme is done, the subject closed. A new theme for a new poem has occurred to him.

THE NEW POEM is *Peer Gynt*—and surely we may say of it, with perfect safety, that it is an exercise chosen by the poet in order to bring into play every mental resource that had to be left unused in the writing of *Brand*? And must we not, therefore, demand of those that go to see it a complete dismissal from their minds of the Ibsen image which they have formed through *Brand*? To see *Peer Gynt* through a veil of *Brand*—a veil thickened further, probably, by memories of *Rosmersholm* and *Hedda Gabler* and photographs of Ibsen in his interminable beard—can only impose upon a charming, sentimental fable a hairy Puritanism of the gloomiest kind.

Seen, as it were, in isolation and for itself alone, what is *Peer Gynt*? It is the opposite of everything that Ibsen is supposed to be. The principal character is a rogue who pleases us purely because self-indulgence is his answer to all the problems we take most seriously. His life-story is spun out for us at disgraceful length—a windy epic that can always be cut and still seem to be as windy as before. Its language—at least, in translation—is entirely undistinguished, and the whole play is devoid of the mettle, the exactitude, the outstanding characteristics, that go to make up our image of Ibsen. In place of sternness and propriety, there is such overwhelming laxity that there are moments when one feels that Peer Gynt was the real author and Ibsen the principal character. The recklessness with which the play moves from Nordic bogeyness to Mediterranean houriness, running a tramline from Copenhagen to Ischia, is as hard to credit as, say, Doughty's *Dawn in Britain* interleaved with *The Arabian Nights*. As for

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the softness of the whole thing—the rogue's love for his mother and his redemption in the lap of one of Goethe's long-suffering and purple-hearted women—this must make any modern girl rage against the shameful and iniquitous ideal which Ibsen has foisted upon her sex. Or do women not care very much what degraded examples the male dramatist holds up to them? Probably not, so long as he sees to it that they are never *down-staged*.

IBSEN'S GENIUS was summed up by Henry James in the words: "I feel in him, to the pitch of intolerable boredom, the presence and the insistence of life." We are bound to reject this magnificent description in respect of Ibsen as a whole, but can it be bettered in respect of *Peer Gynt*? While we are sitting watching it, we pray for release, and when the Button-Moulder keeps postponing the final reckoning at the cross-roads, the whole audience groans like one aching behind. And yet, once released and restored to something like strength by sleep, what remains but a wonderful residue of pleasure and satisfaction? Our own minds and emotions have continued the cutting which the director began but could never complete, and we are left with memories of *tableaux*—sensuous moments of still-life, present and insistent, and one absurd figure travelling the world like a comic Wandering Jew. Even a slight confusion of presentation—as in Michael Elliott's production at the Old Vic, in which the text has been modernised by Michael Meyer while the Trolls have been left to caper in Victorian fur-pieces by Richard Negri—cannot lessen our pleasure in the fact that self-indulgence has got the better of both respectability and death and received a good woman's lap for its reward.

THE NORWEGIANS, of course, found it hard to forgive the author of *Brand* for becoming the author of *Peer Gynt*. But the author himself was as much beyond shame as his play is beyond criticism. "My book *is* poetry," he replied, "and if it is not, it *shall* be. The conception of poetry in Norway shall come to fit itself to the book."

Of course that is what has happened. The whole world's conception of poetry—a poetry of ideas and imaginary situations, not of words—has changed so as to fit itself to *Peer Gynt*. Only the public conception of the author himself, the fabricated image, has remained fixed, built gruffly and stonily upon *Brand* and the later plays. Can we, at this late date, re-build it in more fluid form? We could if we tried, and we could begin, perhaps, by replacing the old false image with a new false one. At mention of the name of Ibsen we could conjure up immediately a picture of Leo McKern sitting pleased and cross-legged in the Sahara sands, while Miss Adrienne Corri, with hardly a stitch on (because it is so hot there) appeals as only Miss Corri can to all that is most base in him. This image would not, as we have conceded, be strictly true, for it would leave out of account many other forms of life in which Ibsen was interested. But it would be a wrong move in the right direction. It would help us to weave portraits with elastic bands, instead of cutting statues in granite. It would be a sort of *poetry*.

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NOTES & TOPICS

International Commentary

After Cuba, Berlin?

By Richard Lowenthal

THE OUTCOME of the Cuban October crisis has greatly increased the chances of a serious attempt to limit the risks of the world-wide conflict between the Soviet bloc and the system of alliances centred around the United States. By the time these lines appear in print, a Russo-American, high-level dialogue on the most critical issues—above all on means for ending the arms race and halting the spread of atomic weapons, and on Germany and Berlin—may well have begun. Despite the immense difficulties inherent in matters where the balance of world power is so directly at stake, such a dialogue may now be undertaken with at least some measure of hope for progress. For the indispensable condition for an agreed limitation of risks is that neither side should count on being able to tip the balance quickly and decisively by the bold use or threat of force; and it now seems possible that, as a result of the Cuban affair, this condition may be fulfilled in Mr. Khrushchev's case for the first time since his assumption of full power five years ago.

To understand this chance of a cathartic effect of the crisis, it is necessary to see it in the context of the worldwide policies that culminated in it. Whatever Señor Castro and his followers may have believed, it is safe to say that Khrushchev's decision to install Soviet-controlled rockets on Cuban soil was not motivated by the wish to deter an American invasion of the island. When the decision was taken—presumably in August, during or just before the Moscow visit of the Cuban delegation that negotiated Soviet military aid—the Soviets had no longer any reason, in view of the development of American policy, to think such an invasion likely. Moreover, it must have occurred to them that the installation of rocket launchers capable of threatening a large part of the United States (as well as of Latin America) would increase rather than diminish that risk. Above all, we know now from Khrushchev's behaviour during the crisis that he was not in fact prepared to stake the security of the Soviet Union for Cuba's sake.

Yet it is equally unlikely that the Cuban rockets were intended for offensive military use against the U.S. in an atomic Pearl Harbour. If their closeness to the target made them technically more capable of a surprise blow than rockets based inside the Soviet Union, it also made them less capable of secret preparations. Nor would the bases have constituted a substantial reinforcement of Russia's own rocket defences against a hypothetical American surprise attack; they could have been wiped out too easily in such a case.

THE REAL PURPOSE, THEN, must have been *politically* offensive—neither actual use nor mere deterrence of attack, but extortion of political gain. By literally "bringing home" the nuclear threat to the American people, the bases would confront them with an unprecedented psychological situation, calculated to weaken their capacity for rational response, and would force on their government a choice of evils. If the U.S. decided to destroy the new bases by preventive action, they would be branded as aggressors and arouse widespread indignation, especially among the Latin American nations. If they failed to act effectively, they would demonstrate their impotence before all the

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world and above all before those same neighbouring states, among whom Castro's ideological appeal would henceforth be reinforced by his new power of intimidation. Even more vital, the new threat of a surprise blow from close quarters would hang over the United States during the next crisis at some other point of Mr. Khrushchev's choosing, paralysing their capacity for action and ultimately forcing them to buy off the threat by concessions of possibly crucial importance for the world balance of power. The timing and context of the Russo-Cuban military aid agreement strongly suggest that if the plan had succeeded, the next concession to be extorted with the help of the completed bases would not have been renunciation of the obsolescent American rocket bases in Turkey, but of the Western rights in Berlin.

IT IS NOW FOUR YEARS since Khrushchev picked the twin issues of the status of West Berlin and the peace treaty with East Germany as his best hope for reversing the trend towards the progressive consolidation of Western Europe and thus decisively tipping the balance of power between the Soviet bloc and the Western alliance. During this period, he has almost completely eroded the remnants of the four-power status for the whole of Berlin and has caused untold misery and bitterness by authorising and protecting Ulbricht's wall. But for all his alternation of threats and "compromise offers," of the setting and lifting of time limits, he has failed to make significant progress towards his real objective. He has neither got nearer to a withdrawal of the Western garrisons, nor forced the Western powers to disavow the German claim to a restoration of "national unity in freedom" which this would have done by imposing changes in the status of West Berlin or recognising the legitimacy of the East German government. He has not, therefore, succeeded in demoralising the West Germans and shaking their loyalty to the Western alliance.

Meanwhile with the British application to join the Common Market, the Soviet estimate of the strength and political importance of the trend towards West European unity has become even higher: it has to be disrupted quickly if it is to be stopped at all. It is thus hardly an accident that the pressure on Berlin has been stepped up at the very time when Soviet and international Communist leaders are beginning to argue whether the unity of Western Europe must be accepted as an accomplished fact. There has been something frantic about this summer's military build-up in the Soviet zone of Germany, the provocation of bloody incidents by Ulbricht's forces and the blunt Soviet refusal to discuss them on a four-power basis, the renewed hints of a peace treaty followed by unilateral action, all culminating in the abolition of the post of the Soviet Commandant in East Berlin who had been normally responsible for local four-power contacts. Yet so far from eliciting Western concessions, the pressure has lately resulted in a corresponding hardening of the Western attitude, demonstrated both by a refusal to tolerate armoured Soviet sorties into West Berlin under any pretext.

IT WAS AT THIS MOMENT of acute and critical deadlock over Berlin that Khrushchev took his decision to open a "second front" of military-political pressure in Cuba. The post of Soviet Commandant for East Berlin was abolished on August 22nd, and an East German city commandant appointed four days later. The military aid agreement with Cuba was announced on September 2nd. On September 7, Kennedy responded by asking Congress for authority to call up 150,000 reservists during the recess—a measure still primarily intended for a Berlin emergency, but taken amidst a public clamour for action against the Cuban arms build-up. On September 11, the Soviet government issued a long statement denouncing alleged American aggressive intentions against Cuba, and incidentally foreshadowing a pause in Berlin pending a resumption of negotiations in November, "after the Congressional elections." The last clause was patently absurd. To-day it is evident that Khrushchev was really waiting for the new trump card in the Berlin game which the completed rocket bases in Cuba were to give in his hand. When the card was struck from his eager fingers, the most dangerous gamble so far in his Berlin campaign had failed.

IT IS JUST POSSIBLE that this failure may become a turning point in Soviet foreign policy. I am not saying that it *is* a turning point. The forced withdrawal of the Soviet rockets does not mark a decisive change in itself —it merely prevents a change in favour of the Soviets that would otherwise have taken place. Nor can the proof that Khrushchev is not prepared to risk a world war for the sake of his Cuban base be viewed as a new element in the situation: it may be surprising to Castro, but hardly to Kennedy—or to Mao Tse-tung. The fact that the Soviets were defeated, and seen to be defeated, in a direct confrontation with American power will, of course, strike a blow at the myth of their invincibility—but it could be reversed in another crisis in geographical and technical conditions more favourable to the Soviets, and should not give rise to the opposite myth of American omnipotence.

What may really give unique importance to

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this event is simply that it occurred at a moment when Soviet policy was already moving towards a crossroads—that it is only the latest and most dramatic of a long series of disappointments of Khrushchev's hopes for a quick and decisive advance towards the world-wide supremacy of the Communist powers, to be achieved without world war. Ever since the autumn of 1957, when he had overcome the post-Stalin crisis in Eastern Europe and consolidated his own power in Russia itself, he has not only proclaimed this aim but pursued it, with supreme confidence and abundant energy, through a whole series of deliberately created crises alternating with pleas for top-level negotiations to gain his demands. If his methods have been less rigid and doctrinaire than Stalin's, his aims have been more ambitious and his brinkmanship correspondingly more daring.[1] But just as his latest adventure is beginning to convince some of the former Western admirers of Khrushchev's version of "peaceful co-existence" that he does not, after all, share their desire for "stability," he himself must face the fact that the assumptions on which his ebullient self-confidence was based have crumbled one by one.

Khrushchev believed that he could advance much faster than Stalin in part because he stood on Stalin's shoulders, having inherited the industrial, military, and imperial position of a world power—and in part because he was prepared for a bolder and more flexible use of that position, both in unleashing revolutionary forces abroad with less concern for their control and in stimulating the productive forces at home with more regard for their incentives. Domestic reforms would speed the achievements and increase the attraction of the Soviet system, raising its capacity for genuine peaceful competition with the West, while changes in foreign policy and world Communist strategy would improve its ability to expand its influence by nuclear diplomacy, aid to uncommitted nations, and support for revolutionary movements.

IN THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD, the new strategy was based on three groups of assumptions.

First, recognition of the fraternal equality of independent Communist powers, such as China and Yugoslavia, and of the right of non-ruling Communist parties to find their own road to power would not produce conflicts of interest and increasing friction within the "Socialist camp," as Stalin had feared, but would improve mutual harmony and speed the exploitation of revolutionary chances everywhere.

Second, support for the uncommitted ex-colonial nations, whom Stalin had still regarded as "stooges of the imperialists," would in fact keep them out of the "imperialist camp" and permit the use of the irresistible force of de-colonisation for weakening it. Moreover, even where independence had been achieved in peaceful forms, the inevitable conflicts with private foreign interests and the acute social tensions of the process of modernisation in those countries contained an enormous revolutionary potential. By a skilful combination of Soviet-bloc support from without with Communist activity from within, it should be possible to guide this revolutionary flux into Communist channels.

Third, the "imperialist camp," paralysed by the nuclear balance of terror, would be unable to resist its steady weakening by de-colonisation, which would also increase its economic difficulties and thus lead to a "sharpening of the class struggle" in the leading industrial countries of the West. As a result, the imperialist powers could be forced, by an alternation of "crisis creation" and negotiation, to buy one temporary respite after another by piecemeal retreats, until the balance had been transformed into an irreversible preponderance of the Communist side.

THERE IS NO NEED HERE to re-state the reasons why the assumption of a harmony of interests among independent Communist powers has proved wrong.[2] The growth of Sino-Soviet friction and rivalry for influence on other Communist parties is obvious, and it has not only led to the formal renunciation of its "leading role" by the CPSU, but to the actually increasing emancipation from its guidance of a number of Communist parties, from the pro-Chinese Albanians and Indonesians to the anti-Chinese Indians and Italians. Instead of a harmonious advance, Khrushchev thus faces a challenge to Soviet control, and to his personal authority, in an area where it used to be undisputed.

The process of de-colonisation has indeed proved irresistible, but while it has weakened the old colonial empires and created many areas of revolutionary tension, the Communists have only exceptionally been able to exploit it for seizing power. Only in Vietnam did they lead the original struggle for national liberation. Only in Cuba have they captured an originally non-Communist revolutionary regime by backing it in its conflict with the United States. In many other cases, from India to Egypt and from Iraq to Guinea, the nationalist leaders have sooner or later discovered that conflicts with particular Western interests or policies do

[1] *Cf.* "The Changed Antagonist," ENCOUNTER (No. 88, Jan. 1961) and "The Dangerous Year", ENCOUNTER (No. 93, June, 1961).

[2] *Cf.* "Duel with a Shadow," ENCOUNTER (No. 101, Feb., 1962).

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not preclude them from continuing to receive Western as well as Soviet aid, and thus do not force them to accept a dangerous, one-sided dependence on the "Socialist camp"; accordingly, they have preferred to pursue their own, undoctrinaire, and uncommitted road of development rather than accept the Communist prescription.

As FOR THE Western powers themselves, they have neither shown the economic decline nor the paralysis of will anticipated by Khrushchev. The vigorous economic growth of the Common Market countries, which include some of the main losers from de-colonisation, has been a major offence to Communist theory. In the last few months the Soviets have made the first reluctant adjustments in their attitude to it, while an open and bitter dispute has arisen between the French Communists, who continue to fight European integration "in principle", and the Italian Communists, who denounce this policy as "narrow, reactionary nationalism" and wish to use the Brussels machinery for improving the standard of living of the Italian workers!

Politically, the West has certainly shown many signs of confusion and wavering in the face of Khrushchev's bewildering tactics. Still, it has not allowed him to gain any one of his major objectives. Since the beginning of the Kennedy era, the West has responded to his pressure by a more imaginative competition for the underdeveloped nations, a new impulse for wider West European and Atlantic unity, and a strengthening of its military defences. Above all, it has so far frustrated him in Berlin.

Yet it is not easy for a Marxist-Leninist believer to accept the evidence that History, his god, has forsaken him. Hence it is not surprising that as disappointment and frustration mounted, the element of threat and force should have become more and more predominant in Khrushchev's policy—that he should have moved closer to the brink and tried to force History's hand. That, I think, is the meaning of the Cuban adventure.

WHAT, THEN, about the other side of Khrushchev's earlier optimism—his confidence in the growing superiority of the Soviet system in peaceful competition with the capitalist world, in the rapid rise of productivity and living standards within the Soviet empire? During the past five years he has worked hard to fulfil that prophecy by experimenting with various domestic reforms—not, of course, as an alternative to his programme for revolutionary expansion, but as its complement; and here he has scored considerable initial gains. As time went on, however, results in this field began also to lag increasingly behind the expectations of the Soviet leaders. While the disappointments abroad could be blamed on the resistance of reactionary forces and the unreasonable behaviour of erring brethren beyond Moscow's control, the domestic failures were clearly due to the dead hand of the Soviet regime's own past—to an insufficiently radical and effective break with the Stalinist legacy.

Broadly, Khrushchev's hopes of speedy domestic improvement rested on three main pillars. The first was that his reforms of the machinery of planning as well as of agricultural policy would result in better incentives for workers, peasants, and managers, in the elimination of bureaucratic waste, and therefore in an accelerated rise of productivity all round. The second was that on the level of industrialisation now achieved, and with the protection of the nuclear balance of terror, he could afford to allocate a higher share of investment to the production of food and consumer goods without endangering the output of military equipment required for his foreign policy objectives. The third was that the granting of greater domestic autonomy and fairer trading terms to the East European satellites, combined with the development of a planned division of labour among them, would make them willing partners in a more rational use of their common resources under Soviet direction and thus improve both their own welfare and their contribution to that of the Soviet Union.

There can be no doubt that Khrushchev's decentralisation of planning did indeed increase the efficiency of Soviet industry by reducing bureaucratic waste, though it seems also to have created a new cause of waste in the rival interests of the new regional planning authorities. But just as under the old system, a few priority industries, working for state orders rather than for the consumer, seem to have shown the greatest gains. For inspiring a general effort to raise productivity or for achieving a better adjustment of the quality and variety of consumer goods, and indeed of agricultural equipment, to the needs of the buyers, the reforms were far too timid. So long as the managers were tied to the fulfilment of planned quotas and under no pressure to adjust to market demands, no radical improvement could be expected.

IN AGRICULTURE, where Khrushchev made a special effort to overcome the stagnation and misery inherited from the Stalinist era, the initial results were spectacular. By granting better prices and gradually unifying the different types of delivery, by winding up the machine-tractor stations and allowing the collective farms

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to buy their own equipment, and by altogether abolishing delivery quotas for the peasants' individual plots, he gave the *kolkhozniks* their first hope of a tolerable existence in a quarter century and was rewarded by a striking increase in output. Together with the short-term effects of the ploughing up of virgin land, this contributed to the record harvest of 1958. Yet soon enough, pressure to reduce the state purchase price, to force investment of a higher share of the peasants' income, and to cut down the private plots and induce the sale of private cows to the collectives began again—sporadically rather than consistently, but sufficient to undermine confidence; while the bold plan to give the collective farmers what amounted to a guaranteed minimum wage in the form of monthly cash advances was shelved for lack of funds. Together with the inevitable setbacks on the virgin lands, this has led, in fact, to a new stagnation of Soviet agriculture. Though this now takes place on a higher level than in Stalin's time, it has meant the utter failure of the seven-year plan in this field—a failure not only to achieve the promised overtaking of the United States in per capita food consumption, but in part even to keep pace with the growth of the population. The official response to those failures—higher food prices on one side, reorganisation of party control in the countryside on the other—is as inconsistent as the whole record sketched out above. Even more than in industry, the reforms remain too half-hearted to have lasting effect.

At the Central Committee meeting of last March, it was pointed out that one of the crucial limiting factors for the growth of agricultural production was the continued insufficiency of funds for investment, both in the farms themselves and in the production of agricultural machinery, fertiliser, etc. Yet Khrushchev, in replying to the debate, stated bluntly that no diversion of capital into these fields was possible in view of the overriding needs of national defence. Visible defence expenditure had, in fact, been reduced up to 1960, but has been increasing since due to the increase of international tension created by Khrushchev's own foreign policy. By getting into a blind alley in pursuit of his international goals, the Soviet leader had also created new obstacles to the attainment of his domestic objectives.

FINALLY, A DIFFERENT KIND of obstacle has arisen on the way to a rational division of labour within the Soviet Bloc. The Council for Mutual Economic Aid, known in the West as "the Comecon," has been preparing for a coordination of national plans since 1954, and has seriously attempted it for the last five years. But among national planning boards which regulate everything inside their countries and conduct their mutual trade relations by bilateral clearing only, such coordination is far more difficult than among market economies—for every step towards specialisation means that some countries must renounce producing some type of goods, and each such act of renunciation in a Soviet-type economy requires a conscious political sacrific. Hence the greater autonomy in domestic matters granted by Khrushchev to the Communist régimes of Eastern Europe has greatly delayed the fulfilment of his vision of a rational division of labour. As a return to total imperial control of the Stalinist type is difficult to conceive at this stage, this obstacle could now only be overcome by reducing the powers of the national planning boards in favour of increased scope for national and international market relations. Indeed, how is a rational division of labour to be achieved between countries with different systems of administrative prices, which prevent a realistic comparison of costs?

In the bloc as well as within the Soviet Union, economic progress has thus lagged far behind the original sanguine hopes of Khrushchev. And the disappointment is felt all the more keenly because of the striking results of West European economic integration. If the frustration of the Soviet leader's plans for a world-wide political offensive has generated a tendency towards adventure, the frustration of his domestic hopes has begun to create some pressure towards bolder, less half-hearted reforms. Remarkably enough, during the past few months the discussions preparing for such reforms have been proceeding parallel with the propaganda campaigns and military measures preparing for adventure.

THE POLITICAL CASE FOR REFORM was strongest with the forms of economic co-operation within the bloc. On one side, the shock at being overtaken by the progress of West European integration was a powerful argument for the urgency of improvement; on the other, Chinese attempts to undermine Soviet authority in Eastern Europe (successful in the case of Albania) proved to Khrushchev the need to move fast in tightening the bonds with the other Communist regimes in this area. Thus, at last June's Moscow conference of Communist party leaders from the Comecon countries, a number of proposals for closer co-operation which had been first put forward by Polish economists were backed by the Soviets and adopted in principle. An authoritative article signed by Khrushchev himself has since welcomed these steps as inaugurating a higher stage in the development

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of the "Socialist Camp." Khrushchev quotes Lenin's view that the attainment of Communism requires the eventual fusion of the national economies into "a single world-wide co-operative" working according to a common plan, and expresses regret at the refusal of China, North Korea, and North Vietnam to join in working towards this goal (Mongolia has been taken into the organisation as a full member on the same occasion). But Khrushchev also adds that every step of co-ordination must be taken by voluntary agreements between the individual governments concerned. Hence the planners of each country should be given incentives to favour improved intra-bloc division of labour rather than to strive for the greatest possible national self-sufficiency as in the past.

The immediate practical steps proposed include the creation of a multilateral clearing system for the bloc so as to overcome the restrictive requirement of balancing trade between each two member countries; the founding of a joint investment bank to finance specialised enterprises working for common needs and requiring more capital than the country technically best suited for their location can conveniently raise; a strengthening of obligations to fulfil trade contracts; and a revision of prices to make intra-bloc trade more advantageous to all concerned. But to fulfil this incentive function, the revised prices should reflect the true cost relations; moreover, the managers of production units in each country should be allowed direct contact with their opposite numbers elsewhere in the bloc, bypassing the national bureaucracies. At this point, the drive to increase intra-bloc trade links up with the more fundamental question of the reform of planning methods within each country.

Since September, that issue has been openly debated in the Soviet press, starting from Professor Libermann's proposal for reducing the obligations of managers under the plan to the fulfilment of simple quantitative targets, leaving them free to decide their methods of production and procurement and rewarding them with premiums no longer in proportion to "overfulfilment" but to return over cost. Logically, this discussion, too, has led to demands for a drastic revision of prices to bring them into line with costs, including one suggestion to base future price relations on a system of "input-output equations" to be solved by electronic computers. To get the full "revisionist" flavour of this idea, one has to recall that the input-output method, worked out by the Russian-born American Professor Leontieff and long used by Western planning authorities, was rejected in the Soviet Union on "ideological" grounds until a few years ago....

None of the participants in the discussion has yet gone so far as to recommend a market economy within a planned framework on the Yugoslav model. But all start from the premise that further progress of the Soviet economy requires that the managers should be enabled to adjust production to the indicators of cost and demand, and many of them clearly know that there is no way of restoring those indicators and unleashing managerial initiative without restoring the market. Together with China's refusal to join in a bloc-wide division of labour, this evident need to move in the direction of "Titoist" economic reforms has certainly contributed to Moscow's decision to flout the solemn obligation to conduct a persistent ideological struggle against Yugoslav revisionism (which it had assumed in the 1960 Moscow declaration of 81 Communist parties—a decision which became evident during President Brezhnev's recent state visit to Yugoslavia).

IN KHRUSHCHEV'S original concept of this road to the world-wide victory of Communism, there seemed to be no conflict between revolutionary expansion abroad and economic progress within the bloc. Both methods were seen by him as speeding his cause towards the same goal. Conflict, however, has arisen from trying to advance by both methods in practice. For the attempt to expand the sphere of Communist power in the face of stiffening resistence has led to a rise of international tension, involving sacrifices and risks harmful to the promised economic improvement. Unless there was an early collapse of Western resistance to the drive for expansion, the familiar dilemma of "guns versus butter" was bound to assert itself. The more effective the resistance, the more inescapable the need for the Soviet leaders to take a hard choice; they must either seek to clear the road for expansion by taking more adventurous risks, or resign themselves to a new period of "relative stabilisation" of the non-Communist world and seek to promote bolder internal reforms in an atmosphere of international détente. The recent evidence of simultaneous preparations in both directions—towards adventure and reform—indicated that a decision was imminent.

In such a situation, it is naturally tempting for the outsider to speculate about possible alignments in the Communist leadership, and up to a point such speculation is legitimate. It is obvious, for instance, that the Chinese Communists have been pressing as hard as they could for adventure and against détente, for dogmatic orthodoxy and against reform. The Soviets have been frankly disinclined to listen to their advice

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in recent years, but they have had to take their competition for influence on Communist and anti-colonial movements in various parts of the world into account. Obviously, the Yugoslavs had most to gain from détente and reform, and from a decision that would permanently remove the influence of Peking from the councils of Moscow.

There is far less basis for the recurrent Western speculation about a "power struggle in the Kremlin," and most of it is definitely misleading. It is, of course, to be assumed that in facing a critical decision, different members of the Praesidium of the CPSU will often suggest different courses of action, and that some of them have stronger "dogmatist" or "revisionist" inclinations than others. But with most of them we know nothing of these inclinations. That is "no accident"—for the personal tendencies of individual members of the Soviet leadership usually only become visible when the differences assume the character of a sharp factional struggle for power. All the evidence goes to show that there has been no such struggle in Moscow since Khrushchev finally won his battle for Stalin's succession in 1957. The Bolshevik party dictatorship requires a single leader and he need not be a paranoiac tyrant like Stalin but may listen to the advice and arguments of his associates. But it is the leader who takes the ultimate decisions, and factions only form during the interregnum while the succession to this post is in doubt. During the Cuban crisis (as on previous critical occasions), he seems to have been able to decide on a sudden about-turn without consulting anybody. I would suggest that the confusion and contradictions which were apparent in Soviet propaganda during the crucial days are not indications of a conflict of the top, but precisely of the fact that the leader of party and government had reversed national policy too fast for the whole clumsy machinery to shift gears in time.

We must assume, then, that both the decision to risk the Cuban gamble and the decision to withdraw from it have been Khrushchev's own —that he went as far as he dared in trying to achieve a breakthrough that would topple the balance of power, and was compelled to recognise that the risk had become prohibitive under the impact of unexpected, timely, and determined American action. If so, he may have given up the hope of such a breakthrough at the present stage—or he may make one more attempt to force the Berlin issue directly. But all the indications are that unless he can gain a major international victory in the very near future, he will switch to the prepared alternative of détente and reform: he will not and cannot stick much longer to an offensive policy that fruitlessly raises international tension at the expense of his domestic programme.

SUCH A SWITCH would not mean the abandonment by Khrushchev of his world-wide long-term aims. Not even Stalin abandoned them during the 15 years of relative stability preceding the Second World War, and he was a less ideological ruler than Khrushchev. But it would mean his willingness to co-operate seriously—without thought of short-term trickery—in the limitation of nuclear risks, even at the risk of more open and far-reaching divergences with Peking. It would mean a period of more far-reaching domestic reforms for the benefit of the Russian and Russian-ruled peoples. It would therefore mean a further slow but steady increase in the strength of those modern social elements in the Soviet Union who do not share the ideological preoccupations of Khrushchev and his party, and hence of the ultimate transformation of his truce into a real peace under his successor. It would mean, in other words, the return of some of the chances we missed in the years between Stalin's death and Khrushchev's victory, and which have not existed in the past five years.

ALL THIS, HOWEVER, is still uncertain. At the time of writing, we have no means of knowing whether the crucial choice has yet been taken, or whether a decisive crisis over Berlin is yet to come. What, then, can the West do to preserve its safety and yet facilitate a major turn in Soviet policy?

The first and immediate need is still to hold the line, particularly in Berlin. The presence of the Western forces here is not negotiable except in the framework of an all-German solution and the general disengagement of the powers from the centre of Europe—and that is not for now. Nor can the claim to such an all-German solution be compromised in the meantime. Technical accommodations on this political basis are possible—a political retreat from this basis is not. If the Soviets, despite their failure in Cuba, still wish to force a crisis over Berlin, we have to live through it.

But firmness in holding on to essential Western positions, however necessary, is not enough. If the road of adventure must be blocked, the road of détente must be left open. The chance of serious negotiations on banning atom-tests with effective controls, on closing the nuclear club, on creating atom-free zones in regions where no forces of the super-powers are stationed, will sharply improve once the Soviet decision to abandon hope of an early breakthrough is taken. Negotiations on Soviet eco-

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nomic relations with the Common Market will also assume increased importance from that moment. It is as much in our interest to foster the policy of domestic reform as it was to frustrate the policy of adventure. This is not yet the moment to discuss a detailed programme for such constructive negotiations, but the general direction is clear.

From what we have seen of the attitude of the American administration during the Cuban crisis, the prospects for such a policy combining firmness on the power conflict with open-mindedness on common interests seem good. If it is pursued, the West may still pluck out of the nettle of the nuclear confrontation over Cuba, the flower of a genuine détente. And if such a détente in the Cold War will still fall short of safety, it may yet give a chance to the forces of more fundamental change to work themselves out.

Cathedral Town

After a poem by François Monod, 'Reims'

Cathedral,
I shape you in the air with my hands
In a night when a cutting wind
Counts the hours
With bursts of rain.

Cathedral,
Guardian of my childhood
In the local night,
Over the little town
The roofs are eyelashed with rain

And the iron bell
Swings out again
Each quartered note dwindling down
A shaft of present and past
To reductive monotone.

I lived in Armagh in a time of war,
The most unconscious time of my life.
Between two stones may lie
My future life
Waiting that you pass by.

If she pass by
Dislodging the stone of my youth,
Cathedral of my childhood,
Witness for me,
Intercede for me.

John Montague

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"Going into Europe"

WE DON'T suppose many of our readers, any more than we, have managed to keep quite free of the passion and polemics of the current "Britain and Europe" debate. What has been a constant source of surprise to us has been the unpredictability of almost everyone's attitude—not merely to the "pro" and "con" of the relatively technical questions of Common Market entry but more interestingly to the deeper emotions involved. "Regional poets" have turned out to be internationalists; cosmopolitan travellers to be "provincials"; the idea of "little England" appears suddenly to be both virtue and vice.... For that reason we have tried to document the attitudes of writers, scholars, and intellectuals generally, by means of an informal enquiry. We had no formal questions to put, but preferred brief statements of attitude or analysis, possibly in reply to the questions one puts to oneself.

We expect something like a hundred replies from a wide cross-section of "the intelligentsia." Of each writer we only asked how he personally felt about the "Britain and Europe" issues and controversy, and it soon became obvious that we were as curious about the "colour" or character of his own views as he was about everyone else's. When the bursts of hope, despair, and cool clear light are all in, we'll all know. Published below is the first batch of comments, printed in the order of postal arrival; the others will follow next month, together with (if possible) some kind of final tabulation.

A Symposium

Leonard Woolf:

A RATIONAL ANSWER to the question whether we should enter the Common Market would depend on (a) extremely complicated assessments of extremely complicated economic facts, and (b) guesswork on future political and economic events. I have no real knowledge of these economic facts, and economics and professional economists seem to me completely phoney. Not being a professional economist or professional prophet, I can give no rational answer to the question, but my knowledge of history and my political instincts make me think that on the whole it would probably be advisable for us to enter the Common Market.

Kingsley Amis:

WHEN I FEEL DEPRESSED about England—after being refused dinner in a restaurant at five-past-eight, or hearing an upper-class voice baying across the street—I tend to favour our entry into the Common Market, on the notion that *any* change is to be welcomed. A closer economic relation with the Continent seems desirable, even necessary. And, although none of the countries of the Six interests me particularly, I can contemplate closer cultural ties without shuddering.

It is the inevitable progression to political unity that I find disturbing. My (inexpert) view is that, while the three smaller members are politically fairly virtuous, or negligible, France, Italy, and Western Germany are potentially very wicked. In an eventual European Parliament, the right-wing Catholic parties in these three countries, not to speak of what the Communists might get up to, would very likely be in a position to outvote our own middle-of-the-road parties and their potential allies, thus frustrating President Kennedy's fervent hope and wish that we should give him a hand by stopping Europe from going undemocratic.

I think too that, while we no doubt do not in fact enjoy a "special relationship" with the United States politically or economically, we certainly do culturally, taking the word in its broadest sense. I value this and I cannot believe it would not be difficult for a Continentalised Britain to maintain. I have similar views—and similar fears—about our relationship with the Commonwealth.

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All in all, my position was well rendered by some remarks of John Terraine in a recent *Spectator*, to the effect that the English-speaking countries (which we helped to found) belong to the future, whereas Europe is a place we have spent much of our history trying to extricate ourselves from.

C. S. Lewis:

I SUSPECT that the decision about the Common Market is very like that which confronts the losing chess-player: "Which of your rooks will you lose?" As for the larger issues, I want what we certainly shan't get—a super-national state built out of units far smaller than the existing nations: units like Wessex and Picardy, not like "Britain" (a horrid word) and France. Units so small, and real, would then safely develop the greatest local diversity of language, culture, and custom. England did not achieve unity by a League of Barons. The Barons were (for all practical purposes) eliminated; the towns, shires, and even parishes, survived. That is our model.

James Morris:

ONCE OR TWICE in a lifetime history hits us slap between the eyes, and we can either stagger forlornly into the shadows, or get in there fighting. Such a nasty affront has circumstance lately offered the British, a people that has, through many centuries, always relished a rough-and-tumble. The end of our Empire, with all its complex advantages of trade, strategy, and resource, has suddenly biffed us one—or rather, as is the way with violent assaults, made our nose bleed retrospectively: either we can, with a whimper and a flag-wag, decline into maudlin mediocrity, or we can hitch up our pants, tuck in our jaw, whistle ourselves some jaunty rhythm and wade into Europe.

The issues are, to my mind, as basic as that. I do not believe that we shall survive as an influence in the world if we do not enter Europe: I am sure that if we do, we shall be revivified and invigorated as every man of spirit is, when his hackles are raised by misfortune, and he sees a promising adventure down the street. As a stimulant, nothing could be much flabbier than the Commonwealth, that sop to our self-esteem, that dim intermittent vision of universal niceness. As a political policy, nothing could be more self-delusory than the notion that we can, like some Mother-Figure of mythology, stand in high symbolic presence beyond the squabbling nationalities—the Anglo in Anglo-Saxon, the British in British Columbia, the red, white, and blue in the Australian flag, or the regimental silver of the Indian Army. We are a nation like any other: and more than most, because we are the most vulnerable of all, we must always cock a snook at fortune.

Entering Europe is the hard-headed way: most economists are apparently in favour. It is the romantic way: never was a union so rich in art, history, or evocation. It is the courageous way: dubious indeed will be our chief political partners, and we alone can convincingly stand as guardians of the peoples' liberty. It is the generous way: we shall be the open end, staunch in the belief that if we are part of Europe, Europe is only part of the wide world. It is the *big* way: nothing is more deadening than petty insularity, or more threadbare and provincial than a Power without power.

And above all it is the interesting way. A nation needs a purpose as a man needs a woman: for one as for the other, we should never be scared (if you will pardon, in this context, a telling Americanism) to pugilate.

Colin Wilson:

I'M ENTIRELY IN FAVOUR of the Common Market. I can see no strong ideological reasons why Britain shouldn't enter, and the practical reasons—Britain's trade relations with the "empire," Canada, etc.—seem relatively unimportant. I suspect that the Common Market may achieve in its modest and practical way, more far-reaching results than the League of Nations or United Nations.

It seems to me axiomatic that the world can have no political future without some form of world government—that is, of some central world authority with *real power* of interference in national affairs. It seems equally obvious that attempts to achieve this with one ideological leap will not succeed, any more than Communist ideology would have succeeded without the events of the 1914 war that gave it an opportunity; there will have to be an "economic drift" in that direction, and the best the ideology can do is steer the boat.

It also seems to me apparent that some form of "European union" would be an important step in the right direction—a third power-bloc between Russia and America. I doubt whether such a union would be possible if we start off with ideologies; I can't, for example, see Macmillan, Adenauer, and de Gaulle ever agreeing about anything more "ideological" than the price of coal. But a lot of the differences might tend to evaporate once we have an economic community; there's nothing like a *fait accompli* to stop people waving their principles about.

I don't think that an economic community—even a world-wide one—would erase lines of "national character." I am—in an odd and old-fashioned manner—rather patriotic about England; I admire the English character, the English cast of mind (eccentric and empirical), and the English countryside, and I tend to be suspicious of "foreigners." And I don't see that an economic community—European or world-wide—will make the slightest difference to *this* England, any more than King Alfred's navy weakened the British national character by placing us in touch with Europe; on the contrary, it will only make what is best about England "world property," in the way that Shakespeare's plays or Newton's fluxions are now world property.

To summarise: business is the great catalyst.

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Bernard Shaw's new alphabet, Zamenhof's Esperanto, are still mere ideas, while Pitman's shorthand —less practical in many ways than either—has become a universal language simply because it is a business necessity. The Common Market may be the catalyst that the League of Nations and the United Nations lacked. I think the Common Market might well be the most important political event in Europe since England invented representative government.

Maurice Cranston:

I AM ALL FOR the closest possible union with continental Europe. The present Common Market project does not go far enough, and The Six are too few. Besides, I am sure that the British pressure groups—the agricultural interest, for example—will see to it that the consumer here does not benefit overmuch. And continental competition in industrial production will not diminish the maddening inefficiency of English retail trades. But the Common Market *idea* is what counts, I think. It marks a decisive break with the traditional fetish of national sovereignty. Next, I should like to see the United Kingdom do more to strengthen the Council of Europe, beginning with recognition (long overdue) of the European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg.

Peter Calvocoressi:

ON THE POLITICAL ISSUE I am, rationally, in favour of entry and, temperamentally, in favour of doing things to-day rather than to-morrow. I accept the argument that, on its own, Britain is likely to become a tight little misfit in international affairs. I no longer regard the Commonwealth as an effective *political unit*. I am not bothered by the transfer of some "sovereignty" from the British Parliament to some other body; on the contrary, I feel that a radical change of this kind could give parliamentary democracy a needed shot in the arm. I see no reason to fear that, in the European Community, Britain will be pushed around by its associates and forced into unwise courses; if it is, it will pull out, treaty or no treaty. Finally, I regard the European venture as an exciting one and I think Ministers have been mad to play down this aspect of the matter. Politically the issue is, for me, one between an anachronistic nationalist conservatism and a practical internationalism more in keeping with the present way of the world.

On the economic side I find it almost impossible to decide where the balance of advantage lies, in the immediate or the more distant future. I do not believe in working out the answer by counting economists' heads, but having read what I can of their views I find no economic argument of sufficient force to counter my political predilections. When told that the terms are not good enough, I ask for reasons to suppose that future terms will be better—and ask in vain.

Robert Bolt:

THE TORIES want us to go into the European Common Market because, they say, if we don't go into the European Common Market we shall be left out of the European Economic Miracle. I expect they're right. But what I can see of the European Economic Miracle doesn't much attract me.

Labour wants us to stay out because, they say, if we go in we shall be politically swamped by the influence of others. I don't see why. Have we no influence of our own? Perhaps not. Who should know better than Labour? Yes, bearing Labour in mind, I expect Labour is right about that. I must say though that I'd feel more self-respect as a European Socialist under M. Mendès-France than I do as an English Socialist under Mr. Gaitskell.

If Labour's aim in staying out was an imaginative and self-sacrificing drive to raise the very low living standards of the Black Commonwealth, that would be something different; but it's not; the point at issue here seems to be maintaining the very high living standards of the White Commonwealth.

The Tories want to go in from greed; Labour wants to stay out from inertia. Neither argument is at all engaging. But if that *is* the argument, I think the Tories have the best of it. Greed is at least an active principle.

Peregrine Worsthorne:

I WANT BRITAIN TO JOIN the Common Market so as to build up a strong and united Western Europe, capable of withstanding an increasingly hostile Afro-Asian world.

It is not sufficiently realised just how deeply hated Britain and Western Europe are in Asia and Africa. Optimists suppose that this hatred will diminish as the memory of colonialism fades. But quite the opposite is actually happening. The present generation of Afro-Asian leaders, precisely because they have first-hand experience of colonial rule, are fully aware of its virtues as well as its vices. But the younger generation of leaders, who are now coming to the top, never experienced colonial rule as adults at all and have therefore swallowed the bitter anti-colonial myth undiluted. Anti-Europeanism, in short, is likely to get more rather than less intense.

This being the likely prospect ahead it seems to me quite essential that the former colonial powers should band together, unless they are to resign themselves to seeing their interests picked off one by one, without the United States lifting a finger to help them. Indeed, the elimination of European influence from Africa and Asia is the one aim about which Washington and Moscow can actually agree.

This is not only—or even primarily—a question of power. It is even more a question of morale. All the European colonial powers, including Germany, suffer from a profound sense of guilt towards the emerging peoples, which greatly inhibits them in the defence of their own interests. And where

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As I WRITE *in answer to this question about the Common Market, it seems possible that our disastrous alliance with the United States is likely to end where many of us always dreaded it might. Unconsulted, without warning, we have been told to expect our destruction in the cause of America's private crusade against Communism. Possibly, when our civilisation has been extinguished forever, the odd survivors wandering the poisonous wastes of the earth with their eyeballs streaming down their faces can tell each other that we dead would have been grateful to know that Mr. Kennedy stood firm for our sakes. In this situation, the controversy of the Common Market seems rather academic. However, if we are still allowed life long enough to ever make a decision, it seems to me that the only significant argument involved is the political one of our sovereignty, and the lesson of this has been made horribly clear over the events of the Cuban crisis.*

I don't understand the economic arguments, and from the division of opinion amongst the economists, they seem pretty baffled themselves. Anyway, economists—from Marx onwards—have usually proved poor prophets and even worse moralists.

There is much jeering talk of Little Englanders. Many clever, sophisticated people seem to imagine we are being called on to make a choice about the Good Life, between Chateau Yquem and cocoa. As for the "challenge of the technological age" and all the other forward-looking Common Supermarket jargon and high-minded greed, I, for one, am sick to death of all its ugly, chromium pretence, and am prepared to settle for a modest, shabby, poor-but-proud Little England any day. I'd gladly say goodbye to those hordes of grasping businessmen and technocrats, and see the lot off to the Rhine.

Left alone, I'd make a small start on the socialist revolution by slinging out our defence expenditure (we'd sleep just as well as we have in the last few nights anyway), and spend the lot on education and the other investments that are needed to keep up in the so-called race. I do *want us to be neutralist and that is what keeping out of the Market means. M. Spaak said the other day, "What* is *an independent foreign policy?" He may be right in terms of power politics. It might be a naïve illusion. But it is a decent one, and the only human, responsible one. I would rather die saying "no" than accept the sentence of others. And that goes for American Presidents, as well as for committees of Germans, French, and truckling British Cabinetmen.*

John Osborne

they do not suffer from guilt they indulge in wishful illusions, refusing to believe that their former colonies have turned against them.

What is needed, therefore, is a new European political entity, free both of guilt and illusions, which can promote and defend its interests in the light of ugly contemporary reality. It seems to me that the new European community is precisely tailored to meet this challenge.

What worries Mr. Gaitskell about the Six, in short, is the very thing which attracts me. It seems to me a positive advantage that politically speaking the new Europe should be inward rather than outward looking, if by this is meant a community more concerned to build up its own strength than that of its declared enemies. Nor do I accept for a moment that this is imperialism in disguise. Indeed it is the very opposite of imperialism, since it pays the Afro-Asian world the compliment of assuming it to be thoroughly grown-up and meaning every menacing word that it utters.

Joining Europe, in other words, would be Britain's final recognition that the imperial era is over and that it is necessary to create a new centre of effective power with which to defend her interests throughout the world.

Harold Pinter:

I HAVE no interest in the matter and do not care what happens.

John Gross:

I'VE ONLY a newspaper-reader's shaky grasp of the economic issues; and like all but the experts, my attitude is compounded of vague impressions, whims, and prejudices. Why pretend that there aren't prejudices? I can still get worked up about Nazism in a way which makes me reluctant to sink my differences with a state where Krupp's is once again a power. But even here, the answer is surely that without us the Community will probably be dominated by Germany, while our entry should bring the democratic and liberal forces inside Germany valuable support. The problem of the gulf between advanced and under-developed countries is bigger than the whole Common Market issue, and is going to go on existing whether we go in or not; if it's ever properly tackled it will have to be initially in terms of aid rather than trade, and I can't see why a strong Europe should be less forthcoming with help than an isolated Britain.

One thing I *am* sure of: the Common Market is more than a *Zollverein*, and is also going to bring vast cultural changes, however gradually. Here I feel very enthusiastic. So much of English life in the past decade has been stale and stagnant; people growing up since the war (I very much don't exempt myself) have tended to be ridiculously parochial. This is plainly true of politics, and equally of literature. Most of the current fashions are so many withdrawal-symptoms: the "rooted

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Englishness" of the Leavis clique, the cultural wog-bashing of *I Like It Here*, the phoney regionalism of Tony Richardson—but compile your own list. I don't shed many tears for the Empire, but at least it served to remind us that we were living in the world, and not just in Coronation Street or Little Gidding. Of course, I can feel the tug of folklore, the genius of the language, and (up to a point) the Englishness of English art; but I don't believe that local tradition is seriously incompatible with an international outlook. If it were, though, I'd vote for internationalism every time. Some of my best friends are rootless cosmopolitans.

It won't happen overnight, but entering the Market is bound to mean rejoining the European mainstream, and adding to it. There should be a genuine pooling of ideas, something altogether deeper than well-intentioned UNESCO symposia. British participation could also bring about the revival of an effective non-Marxist left in Europe, once the Thorez and Togliatti generation has been swept out of the way. No doubt we shall also be plunged into a European mass-culture, Bardot and Mastroianni style, but at least it should be a bit livelier than the domestic variety. I'm told that the Swedish for "the Six" is "Sexland."

I'm in favour of foreign cooking, the brotherhood of man, and the right of bus-conductors to wear turbans if they want to. I hope I live long enough to be a citizen of the U.S.E. supporting a campaign for world government. But we have to deal with practical possibilities as they arise. I believe that if we become members, and press from within for an enlightened policy towards the under-developed countries, the Common Market could be a big step in the right direction.

T. R. Fyvel:

"EIN ZOLLVEREIN ist kein Vaterland." Thus, Bismarck. But it's a starting-point. With my own part-Continental background and education, I have for long had no doubt that Britain must move into a union of steadily closer ties with the Continent. Not only for her own benefit and badly needed stimulus. Given Britain's wider world-view, it is also time for a salty British sea-breeze to help blow open the Gothic shutters of landlocked "Little Europe." But let me also say this: I see the attraction of the *idea* of Britain standing apart from Europe as centre of a global multi-racial Commonwealth; but in any conceivable *practice*, this alternative must surely depend on certain pre-conditions. *If* Britain were to-day fervently and eagerly Commonwealth-minded; *if* British businessmen were determinedly (and expertly!) going out for Commonwealth markets as in the first place theirs; *if* British trade unionists were genuinely ready to accept sacrifice for the sake of Commonwealth aid and investment; *if* new skyscraping learned institutions were springing up in London, to which Commonwealth students were flocking and, conversely, young Britons in large numbers were studying Commonwealth languages in order to go out there; and *if*—the biggest if!—all or most of the Commonwealth countries really wanted such a close relationship with Britain, *then* this alternative might be feasible. But surely these pre-conditions simply do not exist. Whether history could ever have taken this turn is doubtful, but in any case it has not happened. If we look at what is actually going on in Britain, at the businessmen seeking link-ups, at the source of new ideas, in administration, in planning, in social style, at the young British generation swarming abroad, then it is at the moment with Western Europe even more than the United States that new contacts in every field are being established. What is to be argued about is surely only how to give form to this trend towards close European ties which is already swiftly under way.

Marghanita Laski:

I AM VERY glad you asked this question and should indeed like to know if many similar people are in the same troubled uncertainty as I. Naturally, in trying to make up one's mind on any such issue, what is wanted first are the facts—in this case the economic facts—and then skilled interpretations of them. Here, no help for non-economists is to be found. Skilled interpreters of apparently equal competence are often diametrically opposed.

So I try to reach a decision on emotional grounds, but this is no easier because here it is I myself who am divided. There is nothing of the Little Englander in me. I feel and have long felt a patriotism towards Europe. I want and have long wanted to be a European, with all the cross-cultural fertilisation I hoped would follow. But any Jew must hesitate about going in with Germany, and any liberal at going in with Adenauer and de Gaulle, though time must modify this reluctance in one way or another. There are the arguments, which I like, that in going into Europe we should be a liberalising and moderating and even a protestant influence. But apparent European unwillingness to accept the Swedes as full members must make one distrust French and German aims and doubt whether our potential counter-balance could be effective.

But then I also feel a patriotism towards the Commonwealth. I am moved by the concept of a group of multi-racial countries sharing a common language and more or less common legal and parliamentary systems, stemming from ours. I feel a responsibility to countries we held in tutelage and have now freed, and like the idea of choosing the association where we have something to give rather than the one probably likely to give us the greater material advantages.

Yet to give we must survive, and we owe to our own people, too, the choice that allows at least a moderate prosperity to be maintained. I think it my duty as a citizen to reach a decision and am worried and ashamed because I cannot. And I do feel bitterly that it was selfishly irresponsible of

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the political parties to make this a party-political issue, thus making it impossible for us to trust as impartial the opinions of many people which might otherwise be of constructive help to us.

Michael Young:

I AM NOT SURE why the idea of Britain in Europe is, for me, so exhilarating. I think it is because, ever since 1951, and increasingly since Suez, I have become more and more oppressed by the claustrophobic spirit of mid-century Britain. Not only have we been insular but, what makes it insufferable, we have clung (like the genteel poor) to our relentless superiority, perhaps above all to our superiority over Europe. A myth-laden fog has begun to seep into our sense of reality.

Now, through the window, is the prospect of Europe. After contracting for so long, our immediate world may begin to enlarge. There may again be a longer stage on which Englishmen could play their parts, and on that stage we could no longer even pretend to superiority.

Outside the familiar Anglo-Saxon community, we should have to deal with people who considered themselves much superior to us, certainly much more "European" than us. I cannot think of any confrontation which would more surely stimulate our national energy, in industry and in culture. I am perhaps too hopeful—the hope rests on the belief that we will maintain some of the world-mindedness which still co-exists with our insularity. If we do, we might be able to prevent the main danger, a Europe also insular, on a larger scale, but determined somehow to get revenge on an overmatching world: another de Gaulle.

Joan Robinson:

THE MOST IMPORTANT problem for the world (which recent events have underlined) is to work a system of peaceful co-existence between nations. It seems to me that for Britain to join the Common Market would be the reverse of helpful in this respect. Our joining would sharpen the division of Europe and reduce the little freedom which we still have to attempt to mollify it.

So far as home affairs are concerned, the most

I AM QUITE STRONGLY *in favour of Great Britain's joining the Common Market. I don't consider myself competent to make expert judgments on the purely economic issues; but, as far as I understand the arguments, the contention that a larger home market is a necessity for modern technically complex manufactures seems to me convincing.*

The chief reason why I think joining the Six would be desirable is that this would entail a voluntary and public surrender of national sovereignty. National sovereignty seems to me clearly incompatible with the contemporary development of communications—both supersonic airplanes and world-wide television—with the lethal character of the weapons owned by sovereign states, and with the enormous complexity and desirable specialisation of modern machinofacture. One of the components of national sovereignty is the right to make war; and this right is no longer a reasonable one to retain.

Nationalism, and its political aspect of national sovereignty, are now being developed to ludicrous lengths; this year has seen the emergence of at least five sovereign states, Ruanda, Urundi, Jamaica, Trinidad, the remaining Caribbean Islands, which, on the basis of population and resources, are certainly not economically viable in the contemporary world; and this undesirable fissiparous process shows every sign of continuing. The safety and prosperity of humanity demand that this trend be reversed; but we cannot preach the desirability of surrendering national sovereignty unless we ourselves are willing to surrender our own. Otherwise our position is ethically untenable.

There is a quite parallel situation in the question of the world population expansion. This is a situation of the greatest immanent danger; but we have no moral right to preach to the Indians and Chinese, for example, the desirability of population control, while we give fiscal and other encouragements to our own population to breed. Nearly all the arguments I have seen about the danger of expanding populations contain a hidden element of racism; and the assumptions of national sovereignty would seem to make this inevitable.

Since I think the voluntary abandonment of national sovereignty an absolute good, I am unimpressed by the arguments founded on the importance of retaining national sovereignty; nor do I think the arguments about the not quite perfect political systems of some of our potential partners are intellectually honest. They are excuses for retaining nationalism, while paying some sort of lip-service to an internationalism which will be unattainable in any foreseeable future.

As a farmer, I shall probably suffer some financial loss if we do negotiate entry into the Common Market.

Geoffrey Gorer

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desirable development to my mind, is to use our gradually growing wealth to improve education, health, and amenities; in short, to make a reality of the Welfare State. Such policies would be ruled out by the flight of capital (impossible to control under the Rome Treaty) which is the reaction of owners of wealth to fear of even mildly radical reforms.

Personally, I have more friends in Asia than in Europe; I do not relish the prospect of having to apologise to them for the shabby way in which they are likely to be treated.

For these reasons I regard the prospect of joining the EEC with fear and distaste.

A. J. P. Taylor:

I AM A EUROPEAN. I am at home in Europe. European literature is my literature. Europe's past is my past. I understand European music, European art. The other civilisations of the world are foreign to me. I don't want to turn inwards, to be merely English.

But the Europe now offered to me is not my Europe. I don't like the people who are running the Europe of the Common Market. I am against their sort in this country. I am against them abroad. I don't want to be tied with one part of Europe against the rest. I am not prepared to renounce the Poles, the Czechs, the Yugoslavs. I am not prepared to renounce the Russians who are as much part of Europe as we are. If any people have put themselves outside Europe by their behaviour, it is the Germans—not the peoples whom we propose to put out. I want amity and co-operation between all peoples, not teaming up with one privileged group against the others.

We belong to the Commonwealth as much as we belong to Europe. Or rather, we and the peoples of the Commonwealth belong together. We are one people. I don't see how we can part from them. Politically we share a common heritage with them —not with the Europeans. Despite cultural links, we have never belonged politically to Europe, and I see no reason why we should begin now.

We set an example to the world, not to Europe. We have exploited the world in the past. All the more reason to give it a hand now. I don't want to join with a few rich white nations against the world of colour and poverty. I want to bring the coloured peoples up to where we are, not to push them down harder than before. Europe of the Common Market is a colour-bar community in economics, if not in politics.

I can understand why the rich are for the Common Market. Cartels and monopolies have always been their way. I daresay it will make the rich richer. The Common Market is the opposite of International Socialism; and I don't see how any Socialist can support it.

It's not our job to settle the problems of France and Germany for them. I don't believe it will make the Germans peaceful or the French democratic just by having us around to keep them in order. We are far more likely to catch revisionism from the one and dictatorship from the other. I prefer Nehru to Adenauer or even to de Gaulle. Who doesn't?

John Douglas Pringle:

I'M A NEGATIVE Common Marketeer. After much anguish—and still with great reluctance—I'm in favour of Britain's entry, not because I really believe in the Common Market or want to belong to a European Union, but simply because I think it's too dangerous to stay out. If you can't beat 'em, jine 'em.

At heart, like most Scots, I'm deeply tribal. My natural loyalty goes to family, birthplace, native country. Uprooted in childhood, I've never quite managed to identify with Great Britain and certainly not with England, though I feel a reasonable affection for both. My nationalism is therefore cultural rather than political and I still have sympathy with Scottish—and other—literary nationalisms. For similar reasons I liked Australia, which is a big country but a small nation. I could understand their kind of nationalism, though, paradoxically, while there I sometimes felt "European."

Politically I think the Nation State is out of date anyway, but as long as there are any sovereign States at all, I'd rather belong to a small Nation State like Britain than to an artificial super-State like Europe. If I were convinced that a European Union would really be a move towards a World Union and not just another power bloc armed with nuclear weapons, I might even be a positive Common Marketeer.

Max Beloff:

IF CHALLENGED, I am sure I would agree that one makes up one's mind about the Common Market and finds the reasons for one's position afterwards. Very few people can have arrived at their decision through the operations of pure reason, because even with regard to economics—and much more so with politics—the number of unknowns is too considerable for any equation to be resolved. Indeed, I cannot now even remember at what point in time I came round to the view that entry into the Common Market was a possible course for Britain to take. I suppose that if I say that I came round at about the same time as Whitehall, that is to say, a month or two before the Ministers, I should be accused of being a member of the Establishment: I cannot say I really mind. When in 1956 I took part in the discussions at Strasbourg out of which came my book *Europe and the Europeans* I still thought it possible that Britain's co-operation in European questions could be based on a fairly flexible set of institutions which would leave intact Britain's links

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with countries overseas. But when it became clear that a choice had to be made between staying out of Europe altogether and a much more far-reaching alteration in Britain's commitments, I came to feel that the former was intolerable. In other words, if one looked at the thing as a matter of the deployment of Britain's energies it seemed to me that Europe offered the primary challenge, because only as part of Europe could Britain's tasks elsewhere be performed effectively.

But this, of course, may be a rationalisation. I suspect that one takes this view for the kind of reasons that determine one's æsthetic preferences. There are extremists on the one side who would presumably prefer to see Britain engulfed in some kind of extended Communist world empire; there are extremists on the other wing who cherish a nostalgia for the imperial Britain of the past. But for the broad middle band of British intellectuals I suppose the real choice is between a European and an American orientation. Personally, by objective tests, I know that I ought to be among the "51st Staters"—I have far more relatives and close friends in the United States than in Western Europe. Nevertheless, I am quite sure that for me the United States will always remain a less familiar and more frightening terrain. Perhaps this is due to early training as a medieval historian; perhaps because one's formative years were passed in ancient cities. At any rate, there it is, and it would be interesting to know how far other people are moved by the same kind of consideration.

In saying this, I should perhaps add a postscript on a less generous note. One always behaves to some extent in reaction against other people's behaviour. The argument (and still more its splenetic accompaniments) in the case of the opponents of "Europe"—Gaitskell, Jay, Healey, *et hoc genus omne*—makes me quite certain that I can only be right if I am on the other side.

THE FIRST THING *that strikes a psychologist in looking at the debate is how well it exemplifies the well-known "principle of certainty." According to this principle, when in a group there are influences acting both in the direction of acceptance and rejection of a belief, the result is not to make the majority adopt a lower degree of conviction, but to make some accept it with a high degree of conviction, while others reject it also with a high degree of conviction.*

The origin of this conviction seems to lie in another principle, that of the resolution of dissonance. According to this principle, a state of doubt when faced with two almost equally desirable alternatives (as in the case of Buridan's ass between his two bundles of hay) is painful, and even the slightest and most momentary preference is made use of in order to enable a choice to be made. Once a choice has been made the object chosen becomes more and more desirable, and the object rejected less and less so. There is good experimental evidence for these principles, and the course of events leading to the present division of opinion, with the constantly increasing cleavage, is very much what a social psychologist would have predicted.

To be aware of these psychological mechanisms is perhaps one way of avoiding the trap of exaggerated partisanship. Clearly the reasons for going in (greater involvement with Europe, opportunities for leadership, expanding markets) are not much inferior or superior to the reasons for staying out (greater involvement with Europe, possible submergence of national identity, weakening of Commonwealth). Both the economic and the political consequences are unclear and very difficult to predict; to have very firm views either way is surely to be governed by emotions rather than by reason.

On the whole, and accepting so many qualifications as to make the final decision more an act of fence-sitting than anything else I would feel that to go in would be better than to stay out. I would add that the best reason I am able to give for this is to be derived from actuarial tables about longevity which must surely apply with equal force to certain elderly statesmen on either side of the Rhine!

H. J. Eysenck

Sir William Hayter:

GUILT FEELINGS enter strongly into my attitude to British entry into Europe. I ought to have realised much earlier than I did that it was inevitable as well as desirable, and to have done something about it. I had many early chances of observing what was going on at close quarters, including involvement in the early negotiations about the European Coal and Steel Community and the abortive European Defence Community and long conversations with Jean Monnet, and I should have seen which way the tide was flowing. But I am afraid I found it inconceivable that the British people or any British Government could be brought to plunge into this tide. I always believed that the Community would succeed, but I also thought that we were likely to stay out and could afford to do so. I now feel certain that I was wrong.

It is like the Sibylline books. We have refused nine of them. We are now being offered six for the same price. If we refuse the six we are bound to pay the same price for three later on. Ten years ago we could have entered Europe on our own terms. Everyone was begging us to come in. The French wanted us as a counter-weight to the Germans, and *vice versa*, while the smaller Powers thought we could protect them against the greater. Now, we can still negotiate terms of some kind.

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In a few years we shall have to make an unconditional surrender to get in.

Go in I am sure we must, in the end. We cannot go on as a friendless fringe country on the edge of Europe, a kind of Spain to whom our former Empire will be of as little help as Spain's is to her. Moreover we had better be honest and admit that it is not a purely economic community we shall be entering. We shall enter what will be, sooner or later, a political federation. And why not?

John Wain:

I THINK what we are witnessing, like most really large-scale processes, is partly a disaster, partly a benefit, but for the most part simply an impersonal thing like the changes of geology.

For the last three hundred years, but more and more rapidly in the last fifty, mankind has been undergoing a process of homogenisation. Once the electric telegraph had made the movement of information virtually instantaneous, national boundaries became legal fictions. These fictions have proved extremely expensive in terms of suffering and bloodshed, in addition to hampering the kind of large-scale organisation of industrial production that modern life depends on. So they have been increasingly rejected as unworkable. But, since humanity revolts against it, homogenisation has had to be driven through in the teeth of human reluctance. Less than a century ago, the American States came to bloodshed because homogenisation overwhelmed them before they could adjust their political differences. In our own century, the sixteen republics of the U.S.S.R. were processed into one by force, often against desperate resistance. In Western Europe, the war of 1914 was a civil war which inaugurated an epoch of civil wars. In present-day India, leaders of minority racial and religious groups undertake suicidal fasts in order to embarrass a government which must, whether it wishes or not, press on with homogenisation.

And now, finally and belatedly, homogenisation is forced on Western Europe. Not by bombs and bayonets, not by mass deportations and labour camps, but by economic arguments and blueprints. The wonder is not that it is happening, but that it didn't happen fifty years ago. I can see the disadvantages. What I cannot see is any alternative.

Nancy Mitford:

I AM IN FAVOUR of England joining the Common Market, since it appears that she can no longer stand alone. We are Europeans; our country is a founder of the civilisation now enjoyed by the whole world. We have more in common with the other founders, our neighbours, than with ex-colonial powers across the oceans. We should form a United States of Europe with the nations whose philosophic and geographic positions we share. Otherwise, may we not become a neglected appendage of North America, a sort of Costa Rica?

Harold Nicolson:

I FULLY SYMPATHISE with those who feel that in the entering of the Common Market we are in some way abandoning our own liberties of action and complicating our difficult economic relationships with the Dominions. I feel, however, that the opponents of our entry into the Common Market should consider the alternative. If we remain outside we shall be isolated on the fringe of European trade, and have no opportunity of co-operating in, and therefore influencing, subsequent developments. Conversely, our entry would enable us to extend our commercial relationships with other countries and would in the end benefit our economy. It would be an agreeable thing if we could maintain the balance of commerce as it was in 1892, but I fear that this is impossible, and that we must face realities and modern necessities.

Iris Murdoch:

THE ECONOMISTS I have talked to seem to agree that the economic advantages of going into Europe are not crystal clear. As a political move it seems to me to be, at this time and in this haste, ill-considered. Why be in such a hurry? It is surely far more important to see to it that the Commonwealth does not fly apart. We in England perhaps too casually assume that the Commonwealth countries love us dearly and will put up with anything. Of course, with our dear brothers too, it is largely a matter of each for himself. But tact and talk and consultations are so important and take time. There are so many issues involved here and we all need to reflect longer. Let us not be dazzled by the ambiguous idea of "joining Europe," which has such a romantic appeal to many naïve hearts. Let us rather use care and *imagination* about how to keep the Commonwealth existing and developing as a political power; and by all means let its "capital" be moved in due course to Delhi.

SENTIMENTALLY *I want to be in closer touch with Europe. But what kind of Europe does a Common Market invite me to touch? I cannot make out. The cultivated Europe of great traditions and contemporary creativeness, of magnificent scenery and decent cooking, of warm-hearted and sensitive friends? Or the Europe of Big Business which would make British business even bigger, and would consequently accelerate the destruction of our own culture, the deformation of our cities and the disappearance of our countryside?*

I cannot make out.

E. M. Forster

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Sir George Thomson:

As A SCIENTIST I have no views. Science, I am thankful to say, is truly international and it will make no difference to British science whether we enter the Common Market or not. As a citizen, without knowledge of economics, I am strongly in favour of joining because I am sure the day is passed when a nation of only fifty million can matter in world affairs. I had rather we were the tail of a decent-sized dog with some hopes of wagging the dog. I don't see us wagging India, still less some of the more recently independent members of the Commonwealth.

Philip Toynbee:

I AM AN economic ignoramus and have made no attempt to understand the more technical issues of the Common Market controversy. I observe that the Labour Party, which I support, is roughly speaking against, and the Conservative Party, which I abhor, is roughly speaking for. Nevertheless my instincts and natural attitudes advise me that Britain ought to join the Common Market. This is partly because I know, like, and admire Europe, while I have no knowledge of, no affection and no particular respect for most countries in the Commonwealth. But it is also because I dislike all forms of Little Englandism. A wider grouping is likely to be a more varied and fruitful grouping.

A. J. Ayer:

I HAVE FROM THE OUTSET been in favour of Britain's joining the Common Market. In fact I was one of those who signed the manifesto which Lord Gladwyn organised. I must admit that I did so without looking much beyond the major principle which seemed to me to be involved. I was moved by the belief that the jealous preservation of national sovereignty had become a greater force for evil than for good, and the hope that this might be a step in the direction of some form of world federation which would be a more effective instrument for preserving peace than any league of sovereign nations.

In recent months I have become more hesitant. On economic questions, I have to rely upon the experts and the opinion of the experts is divided. I am, however, impressed by the arguments of those who maintain that the strengthening of this protectionist association will be to the disadvantage of the economically underdeveloped countries outside it; I am apprehensive of the political power of the European cartels; and I see that there is a danger that the Common Market might become yet another instrument in the cold war. I should therefore be happier if it included countries like Sweden and Switzerland which are not also members of NATO.

An argument in favour of our going in is that our influence could then be used to diminish these political dangers. I believe also that there would be more likelihood of its being exerted in the right way if we had a Labour rather than a Conservative government. I am therefore disturbed by the direction which Labour Party policy appears to be taking. I am afraid that, if the Labour Party allows itself to be manœuvred into fighting an election mainly on this issue, it will give an opportunity to the Conservative Party to distract the attention of the electorate from the miserable record of the present government by representing itself as the apostle of progress. I do not infer from this that the Labour Party should favour entry on whatever terms the government is able to negotiate; but I think it should be made clearer than it has been that Labour is not opposed to the idea in principle.

My present position is somewhat indecisive. I still believe that the entry of Great Britain into a European federation is an end which is politically desirable; but I think the means by which this is to be achieved require careful scrutiny. Our joining the Common Market at the present time is in any case only a preliminary step. If a referendum were taken on the question I should be disposed to vote in favour, especially if the only alternative offered were for us to muddle along as we are. I should however wish to be convinced that the terms on which we entered were not such as to make it likely that we were doing no more than help perpetuate nationalism on a larger scale.

T. S. Eliot:

ON THE precise terms which Britain can accept, or on which Britain can be accepted into the Common Market, I do not consider myself competent to pronounce. There are obviously economic, political, and legal problems to be solved. Nor does this seem to me a matter to be decided by a plebiscite. Nor does it seem to me that it should be an issue between political parties.

You seek to obtain the views of "writers, scholars, and intellectuals generally." I am neither a scholar nor an intellectual generally; but, as a writer, I believe that all that any member of these three categories can offer of value is a statement of his personal bias for or against our joining, prior to any consideration of the possible terms.

I have always been strongly in favour of close cultural relations with the countries of Western Europe. For this reason my personal bias is in favour of Britain's entering into the Common Market. And I have not been impressed by the emotional appeals of some of those who maintain that to take this course would be a betrayal of our obligations to the Commonwealth.

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James Reeves

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ART

How Art Writing Earns Its Bad Name

By Clement Greenberg

TWENTY YEARS ago who expected that the United States would shortly produce painters strong enough, and independent enough, to challenge the leadership of Paris? The more knowing you were about art the more surprised you were when it happened. For a long while after it had actually happened you refused to believe it. You were convinced only when confirmation arrived from, of all places, Paris itself.

Jackson Pollock had a show there in 1952, and it made such an impression that, though hardly a picture was sold, his art began to be taken more seriously in certain quarters of the Paris art world than anywhere else, including New York. And along with Pollock, the new American abstract painting in general began to be taken more seriously in the same quarters. As it then seemed to me, it was over a year before news of this effectively reached New York. From that time the success in America itself of the new American painting dates, at least as far as collectors and museums and art journalism are concerned.

But it is as though a fatality dogged the success: a fatality of misinterpretation that was also a fatality of nonsense. I call it a fatality—though it might be more proper to call it a comedy—because the misinterpretation and the nonsense have come not from those who professed to reject the new American painting, but from friends or supposed friends. It was as though the critics of modern art set out to justify everything that philistines have said about them.

LATE IN THE SAME YEAR as Pollock's Paris show, an article by Harold Rosenberg appeared in *Art News* in New York under the title "Action Painting."* Though it named no names, it was taken as a first attempt to throw real light, friendly or hostile, on the intentions of the new American painters. Transposing some notions from Heidegger's and Sartre's Existentialism, Mr. Rosenberg explained that these painters were not really seeking to arrive at art, but rather to discover their own identities through the unpremeditated and more or less uncontrolled acts by which they put paint to canvas. For them the picture surface was the "arena" of a struggle waged outside the limits of art in which "existence" strove as it were to become "essence." "Essence," or the identity of the painter, could be recognised by the painter himself only in the very act of painting, not in the result, it being presumed, apparently, that acts in themselves identified you as results or consequences could not. The painted "picture," having been painted, became an indifferent matter. Everything lay in the doing, nothing in the making. The covered canvas was left over as the unmeaning aftermath of an "event," the solipsistic record of purely personal "gestures," and belonging therefore to the same reality that breathing and thumbprints, love affairs and wars belonged to, but not works of art.

Mr. Rosenberg did not explain why the painted left-overs of "action," which were devoid of anything but autobiographical meaning in the eyes of their own makers, should be exhibited by them and looked at and even acquired by others. Or how the painted surface, as the by-product of acts of sheer self-expression ungoverned by the norms of any discipline, could convey anything but clinical data, given that such data is all that raw, unmediated personality has ever been able to convey in the past. Nor did Mr. Rosenberg explain why any

MR. GREENBERG *is one of the best-known American art critics, a former editor of* PARTISAN REVIEW. *A collection of his essays, "Art and Culture," was recently published by Beacon Press in Boston.*

* Now published in *The Tradition of the New* (Thames & Hudson, 15s.). See also Harold Rosenberg, "Critic within the Act," ENCOUNTER, June, 1961 and Donald Davie, "Immoderate Criticism," August, 1959.

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one by-product of "action painting" should be valued more than any other. Since these things, and the action that "caused" them, belonged to no discernible branch of social activity, how could they be differentiated qualitatively? There were still other things that Mr. Rosenberg's eloquence left unexplained, but they need not detain us here.

WHEN HIS ESSAY first appeared it was read by many people as an exposure of the new abstract painting. To those who could not make head or tail of Pollock's middle-period paintings, it offered a plausible explanation: if these things were not really art you had every right to be baffled by them. A corollary was that those who claimed to be able to tell the difference between good and bad "dripped" Pollocks (and Mr. Rosenberg, patently, did not so claim) were deluding themselves and others. Abstract art was under renewed attack in the early 1950s, and "Action Painting" was greeted —or resented—as a veiled blow at "extremist" art. As that, it was soon on its way to being forgotten, as movingly written as it was.

That it finally did not get forgotten was mainly the fault of a young English art critic named Lawrence Alloway. Almost two years after its original appearance it was Mr. Alloway who rescued Mr. Rosenberg's article and set its ideas and terms in effective circulation. Not that Mr. Alloway was an opponent of "extremist" art. On the contrary, he was an ardent champion of it, and especially of the new American kind—being, for that matter, an equally ardent, practically a sectarian champion of most things American. Mr. Rosenberg's notions seem to have struck him as offering the right kind of subversive and futurist explanation of the subversive and futurist and very American species of art that Pollock seemed to represent. The very flavour of the words, "action painting,"' had something racy and demotic about it—like the name of a new dance step—that befitted an altogether new and very American way of making art—a way that was all the newer, all the more *avant-garde*, and all the more American because the art itself was not really art, or at least not art in the way the stuffy past had known it. At the same time, it all sounded, in Mr. Rosenberg's rhetoric, so dramatically modernistic and opaquely profound —like Rimbaud and Sartre and Camus rolled into one—and *avant-garde* art critics have a special weakness for the opaquely profound.

NOT ONLY DID Mr. Alloway take Mr. Rosenberg's amphigoric piece of art interpretation as a manifesto in favour of its subject (and he was but the first among many to do so); he also took it (again, as but the first among many) as a legitimate statement of the aims of "Pollock & Co." as professed by Pollock himself. There was just enough truth in this to make it ironic. Two or three painters close to Pollock in the early 1950s, but who painted in a quite different direction, did rant about "the act," and did say that what mattered was not to have your art appreciated and recognised, but simply to perform the "act" of making *good* art; what happened after that was of small consequence; for all he cared, one of them is reported as saying, his finished pictures could be burned. The artists in question (every one of whom has since become renowned, and rightly so) were not making much headway in the world at that time, and it would not be unjust to characterise their talk in this vein as sour grapes. How much of it Mr. Rosenberg heard, I cannot say. Pollock told me, very sheepishly, that some of the main ideas of the "Action Painting" article came from a half-drunken conversation he had had with Mr. Rosenberg on a trip between East Hampton and New York (if so, Pollock had been parroting in that conversation things he heard from his friends). Mr. Rosenberg has denied this in print, asserting that his "*literary discoveries* [were] outside his [Pollock's] range" (Mr. Rosenberg's italics). Be all this as it may, Pollock and his friends took Mr. Rosenberg's "literary discoveries," when they were made public, for a malicious representation of both their work and their ideas. After all, it was *good* art, and no other kind, that they were interested in. (If Pollock was the one least upset, though seeming the one most directly aimed at, it was because he could not help feeling that "Action Painting" was a big spoof; and he felt that all the more because he thought he was partly responsible for it.)

Mr. Alloway could not have been expected to know all this seven or eight years ago in London. But he still might have waited for some corroboration before proceeding on the assumption that "Action Painting" was a faithful statement of the intentions of the new American painters. As it was, he propagated Mr. Rosenberg's notions with such conviction and verve, and with such confidence, that "action painting" became current overnight in England as the authorised brand name and certified label of the new abstract painting from America. That it connoted a freakish, new-fangled way of applying paint to canvas made it seem all the more appropriate to what struck most people as being a freakish, new-fangled kind of art—or non-art. And though English art-lovers joined Mr. Alloway (or were led by him into doing so) in reading Mr. Rosenberg's piece as sympathetic to its subject, they found a re-

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assurance in it much like that which Americans had found on its first appearance.

IT HAD BEEN ONE of the certitudes of the forward-looking English art person that however little the English themselves might possess the art of painting, the Americans possessed it still less; and it was another certitude that the French possessed that art supremely and absolutely, after whom came the Latins in general. and then the rest of the non-Protestant or non-Anglo-Saxon world. Imagine the shock, then, when it transpired that the wild new stuff from the United States was being taken seriously in Paris and even exerting an influence on the newest art there. At this juncture the "action painting" business came in opportunely to restore morale, at least for the moment.

For if, as Mr. Rosenberg said, the new American painting was not actually art, then that made it still right for the English to have questioned, and to continue to question, the American capacity for pictorial art, whatever else the Americans *were* capable of. The way out for most English art critics (Patrick Heron is the only exception I know) became to react to Mr. Rosenberg's explanation of the new American painting rather than to the painting itself. Basil Taylor spoke of the "record of a gesture armed with a paint brush." Sir Herbert Read (in ENCOUNTER, July, 1955) called it "wildly arbitrary," a "reflex activity, completely devoid of mental effort, of intellection," the product of a "vacuous nihilism that renounces the visible world and even the inner world of the imagination, and scribbles a graph of its uncertainty on the surface of a blank consciousness." But Sir Herbert mentioned no names and refrained, with well-placed caution, from an outright condemnation.

It was from England and nowhere else that Mr. Rosenberg's notions, with the prestige conferred upon them by Mr. Alloway, were exported to the Continent and back to the United States. That prestige seemed to grow with the prestige of the new American painting itself. What made it wonderful was that nobody stopped to ask what "action painting" could possibly be if it was not supposed to be art. *Avant-garde* art critics everywhere invoked and quoted Mr. Rosenberg's rhetoric—and not only with regard to American painting—and then went on to talk about art and artistic qualities to show that they had not grasped a single implication of his ideas. For Mr. Alloway as for everybody else who "dug" "action painting," there were superior and inferior exponents of it, superior and inferior examples of it. Just as if it had not been Mr. Rosenberg's point throughout his essay to exclude the possibility of such discriminations.

YET THIS MUDDLE attested precisely to the fact that the new American painting was making its way in the world on the basis of qualities more substantial than those allowed it by "Action Painting." It was making its way as art, unmistakable art, not as a super-*avant garde* stunt or as an interesting aberration. Its very real success, worldly and other, no less than the concurrent, if ironical, success of his article —or rather the muddled reading of his article— may be what now leads Mr. Rosenberg to talk as if it had been meant from the first as a wholly sympathetic treatment of the new American painting. He has also let it be known recently that it was mainly "de Kooning & Co." he had in mind, not Pollock. This last will confound, whether they admit it or not, all those art writers who took it for granted all along that Mr. Rosenberg had written about and for Pollock, and for whom de Kooning was, or is, too European (or "civilized") to qualify as an "action painter." But these writers deserve to be confounded for not having been confounded by Mr. Rosenberg's article in the first place.

SENSE, THE TORTOISE, usually overtakes nonsense, the hare, even in this not quite perfect world. It begins to dawn on art-lovers here and there that they have not yet really seen any kind of painting that conforms to Mr. Rosenberg's description. Art turns out to be almost inescapable by now for any one dealing with a flat surface, even if it is mostly bad art. The works of the "gestural" painters, of the "action" athletes, downtown in New York and elsewhere (I'm not referring to the artists originally aimed at by Mr. Rosenberg) reveal themselves as mannered with mannerisms borrowed from de Kooning for the most part, but also from Kline, Gorky, Pollock, and Still, and more lately from Monet too, and maybe even from Magnasco; and their main trouble is disclosed to be a want, not an excess, of spontaneity. It is discovered that flung paint can be as thoroughly controlled and as carefully manipulated as patted or stroked paint. And now that the accidental has been completely assimilated to the tradition of the painterly, even the donkey's tails and the painting chimpanzees and parrots expose themselves as abjectly derivative—and we no longer have to know what artists their owners or keepers admire. Like the wildest painter on 10th Street or in the 14th *arrondissement*, they can't get out of their systems, moreover, the habit of being guided by the shape of the support.

Pollock's art turns out at the same time to

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rely far less on the accidental than had been thought. It turns out, in fact, to have an almost completely Cubist basis, and to be the fruit of much learning and much discipline. The same is true, perhaps excessively true, of de Kooning's art. It was the first look of the new American painting, and only the first look, that led Harold Rosenberg to take it for a mystification beyond art on to which he could safely graft another mystification. (That his "literary discoveries" could seem to anyone to throw light on anything is explained only by the supposition that the blind actually prefer being led by the blind. This would also help explain Sir Herbert Read's present status as an authority on art.)

But if it is left to Mr. Alloway, apparently, the comedy will not end quite yet. Nor will it if it is left to that estimable French art writer, Michel Tapié,* with whom it embraces post-war art in Europe as well as America. Both Mr. Alloway and M. Tapié can *see*, and they do not want for courage either. Mr. Alloway, in particular, I always find refreshing to read. But like M. Tapié, he seems to lack a sense of perspective, and it is this that makes them both inveterate futurists, votaries of false dawns, sufferers from the millennial complex—and to that extent comedians like Mr. Rosenberg, who back in 1952 greeted the beginning of the end of painting as an art.

M. Tapié considers post-war abstract painting an almost completely revolutionary phenomenon because, as he thinks, it incorporates new formal structures analogous to the kinds of new structure being investigated by physics and mathematics to-day. I am far from sure that I understand him, but even so, I fail to discern anything in the new abstract painting that is that new. I can see nothing essential in it that cannot be shown to have evolved out of either Cubism or Impressionism (if we include Fauvism in the latter), just as I cannot see anything essential in Cubism or Impressionism whose development cannot be traced back to the Renaissance. In the way of intellectual journalists nowadays (though he is far more than that), M. Tapié has gone in search of something newer than new in order to explain things whose newness is eventually—and must be—self-explanatory.

Mr. Alloway succumbs to the same fallacy of exaggerated newness when he writes, in *Art International*, that the "existentialist description of abstract art" is the "best one currently available." That description consists in the "idea of art as perilous performance and the resultant artefact as unique but [*sic*] absurd." Here the cup of rhetorical novelty runs over. As if every successful work of art since art began were not unique and absurd in the sense that Sartre or Merleau-Ponty gives these words. And as if success in the creating of art, whether Fra Angelico's or Pollock's, could possibly not involve the peril of failure. And as if the peril had not been as great for Rembrandt in his "performance" as for Mondrian or Pollock or Newman in theirs.

It is typical of the best, not worst, art writing of our time that propositions applicable to all successful art are applied to contemporary art as though relevant to the latter alone and expressing insights which the latter alone has made possible. The strongest of *avant-garde* critics—and Mr. Alloway is one of them—sin out of ignorance, or for lack of an elementary grounding in aesthetics. The same is true, moreover, of an academic *avant-garde* critic like Robert Goldwater (what with the speeding up of history, camp-followers are no longer as patient as they used to be), whose essay on Mark Rothko, which is part of the catalogue for the Rothko retrospective now touring Europe, says hardly anything about its subject which is not equally relevant to Velasquez or Takanobu. It is further typical of contemporary art writing, as Dr. Goldwater's essay again shows, to imply, when praising a living artist, that he has come out of nowhere and owes practically nothing to anything before him. It's as though art began all over again every other day.

All in all, the only place where the absurd has made a new lodgement in the area of art is its criticism. There it flourishes with greater vigour perhaps than anywhere else in our culture (which is, of course, saying a lot). Contemporary art criticism is absurd not only because of its rhetoric, its language, and its solecisms of logic. It is also absurd because of its repetitiousness. Since Manet every step in the evolution of modernist art has been hailed, or condemned, as a revolutionary break with the past, and in each instance the passing of only a little time has refuted this claim. Yet this deters hardly anybody, and the epochs of art succeed one another faster than ever. Repetition has a cumulative effect, however, and the absurdity of art writing

* Michel Tapié de Céléyran (he is a cousin of Toulouse-Lautrec) happens to have one of the keenest eyes of our time for painting. He was among the very first to recognise the merits of Dubuffet, Mathieu, Pollock, and Morris Louis, and it was under his auspices that Pollock had his first show in Paris. His ideas, which are another thing, are found in his catalogue notes for the exhibitions of the artists he has sponsored over the last ten years and more at various Paris galleries (mainly the Galerie Stadler).

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has become systematic where it used to be merely whimsical. Vistas of inanity open up that would have made Apollinaire or Élie Faure blanch. Things that would get expelled from other kinds of writing by laughter multiply and flourish in art writing. In a recent book on Pollock (by an Englishman) we read of his "attempt to disrupt the time flux and invoke a new contingency"; in a recent book on de Kooning (by an American) we read of colours that "erupt through the ceiling, coherent in their poetry of ambiguity"; in another book on Pollock (by an American) we read that one of Pollock's paintings is a "scornful, technical masterpiece, like the *Olympia* of Manet... one of the most provocative images of our time, an abyss of glamour encroached upon by a flood of innocence." (This, about a picture that Pollock himself considered a failure.)

What is there about art writing that encourages this sort of thing? What is there in the people who read art writing that makes them tolerate it? Why is art writing the only kind of writing in English that has lent itself to Existentialist and Phenomenological rhetoric? What is there about modern art itself that leads minds like Herbert Read's and Harold Rosenberg's astray? The answer is not one, I think, that reflects on modern art. It has to do with the speed with which modernist painting and sculpture have outrun the common categories of art criticism, invalidating them not only for the present or future but also for the past. (This has not been a revolution; it has been a clarification.) The widening of the gap between art and discourse solicits, as such widenings will, perversions and abortions of discourse: pseudo-description, pseudo-narrative, pseudo-exposition, pseudo-history, pseudo-philosophy, pseudo-psychology, and—worst of all—pseudo-poetry (which last represents the abortion, not of discourse, but of intuition and imagination). The pity, however, is not in the words; it is in the fact that art itself has been made to look silly.

Morning

Hollow-feeling, empty of sleep and as yet unbreakfasted,
From an already forgotten stranger's bed
I stumble out into an unfamiliar part of the town.

So dazzlingly greeted! The sunlight's sudden recognition breaking
Across a row of houses I have never seen;
These shoppers remote as if some distant generation.

Let me ask of you nothing.
All now seems possible. O let me nothing ask.

Harry Fainlight

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BOOKS & WRITERS

James Agee

Some Memories & Letters — By DWIGHT MACDONALD

IN SOME LITERARY circles, James Agee has come to excite the kind of emotion James Dean did in some non-literary circles. There is an Agee Cult that has come into existence partly because of the power of his writing and his lack of recognition while he was alive, but chiefly because it is felt that Agee's life and personality, like Dean's, are at once an expression of our time and a protest against it. It is also felt that it was not their weakness which betrayed them, but their vitality. In their maimed careers and their wasteful deaths, the writer and the actor appeal to a resentment that intellectuals and teenagers alike feel about life in America to-day, so sleekly prosperous on the surface, so frustrating in the depths.

AGEE WAS BORN in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1909. He went to the nearby St. Andrew's School, then to Phillips Exeter Academy and to Harvard. In 1932 he got a writing job on *Fortune*, partly through my efforts—I was on the staff and Jim and I had been corresponding for several years, mostly about the movies, which interested both of us much more than writing did. For the next sixteen years—except for two out on leave of absence—Agee devoted his prodigious talents to Lucean journalism, like an elephant learning to use a parasol. In 1939 he moved from *Fortune* to *Time*, where he first did book reviews and then wrote the Cinema department. In 1943 he began reviewing movies for the New York *Nation* as well. He resigned from both *Time* and the *Nation* in 1948, specifically to finish a novel, *A Death in the Family*, which was published after his death, in 1957, by McDowell Obolensky,[1] who also published two posthumous volumes of his movie reviews (*Agee on Film: I*) and of his movie scripts (*Agee on Film: II*). But his more general, and important, reason for leaving the Luce payroll was that he had finally come to realise that this was the only way he could ever get down to his own proper work. There was reason for his concern. Although he wrote constantly, in a small, shapely script that contrasted oddly with his oceanic personality, he finished very little; I remember grocery cartons full of manuscripts he had put aside. In 1948 he was thirty-nine, and he had published, aside from his journalism, only a book of poems, *Permit Me Voyage* (Yale, 1934), and a long prose work, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (Houghton Mifflin, 1941).

In the seven years that were left to him, he did manage to bring *A Death in the Family* close to final form and to publish a novelette, *The Morning Watch* (Houghton Mifflin, 1951). But again most of his energies were diverted. For before he settled down to work in a farmhouse in Hillsdale, New York, with his third wife, Mia, he had to get out of the way two profitable articles for *Life*, which he planned to knock out in six weeks and which took him six months. One was on silent-movie comedians; the second was on the films of John Huston. Agee had already, in 1947, written the commentary for *The Quiet One*, a documentary film about Harlem life that was a great *succès d'estime*, but he had never worked in Hollywood. Huston liked his article, and commissioned him to do a script for a film version of Stephen Crane's *The Blue Hotel*. Huston didn't make the film, but he was impressed by Agee's script (and by Agee) and asked him to do one for *The African Queen*. This is mostly just another movie, but it does have several Agee touches—the Anglican service with only shining black faces in the congregation, Bogart's stomach rumblings at the tea party, the peculiar horror of the leeches and the gnats. It was ironical, and typical, that Agee's work with Huston was limited to a conventional adventure-romance film. Before they met, Huston made *The Red Badge of Courage*, and later he wanted Agee to work on *Moby Dick*, but Agee had an interfering commitment. So two jobs that would have given scope for his powers were lost by

[1] Published in Britain by Gollancz.

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luck, or was it destiny? Whichever it was, it was rarely on his side.

After *The African Queen*, Agee did a number of other scripts—for *The Night of the Hunter*, which is realistic and at times macabre in a most un-Hollywoodian way; for a delightful short comedy, *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*, taken from a story by Crane, in which he played the town drunk; for a film on the life of Gauguin (this, said to be his most remarkable script, was never used); for a television series on the life of Abraham Lincoln. Then, in 1955, he died of a heart-attack in a New York taxi-cab, at the age of forty-five.

AGEE WAS A very good writer. He had the poet's eye for detail, the poet's ear for phrasing: "Ahead, Asylum Avenue lay bleak beneath its lamps. . . . In a closed drug store stood Venus de Milo, her golden body laced in elastic straps. The stained glass of the L. & N. smouldered like an exhausted butterfly . . . an outcrop of limestone like a great bundle of dirty laundry. . . . Deep in the valley, an engine coughed and browsed." He could get magic into his writing the hardest way, by precise description:

> First an insane noise of violence in the nozzle, then the still irregular sound of adjustment, then the smoothing into steadiness and a pitch as accurately tuned to the size and style of stream as any violin . . . the short still arch of the separate big drops, silent as a held breath, and the only noise the flattering noise on leaves and the slapped grass at the fall of each big drop. That, and the intense hiss with the intense stream; that, and that same intensity not growing less but growing more quiet and delicate with the turn of the nozzle, up to that extreme tender whisper when the water was just a wide bell of film.

I haven't watered a lawn in forty years, but I remember that was the way it was in Sea Girt, New Jersey. And this was the way trolley cars were:

> A street car raising its iron moan; stopping, belling, and starting; stertorous; rousing and raising again its iron increasing moan and swimming its gold windows and straw seats on past and past and past, the bleak spark crackling and cursing above it like a small malignant spirit set to dog its tracks; the iron whine rises on rising speed; still risen, faints; halts; the faint stinging bell; rises again, still fainter; fainting, lifting, lifts, faints forgone: forgotten.

These passages are from "Knoxville: Summer of 1915," which appeared in *Partisan Review* twenty-five years ago and is reprinted as a prelude to *A Death in the Family*. "We are now talking of summer evenings in Knoxville, Tennessee, in the time I lived there so successfully disguised to myself as a child," he begins, and he concludes, "After a little I am taken in and put to bed. Sleep, soft smiling, draws me unto her: and those receive me, who quietly treat me, as one familiar and well-beloved in that home: but will not, oh, will not, not now, not ever; but will not ever tell me who I am." In between are five pages of reverie, lyrical and yet precise, about the after-dinner time when families sit around on porches and the fathers water the lawns. "Knoxville" is typical of Agee's prose: in the weighty authority with which words are selected and placed; in getting drama, as Dickens and Gogol did, out of description; in the cadenced, repetitive, sometimes biblical rhythm; and in the combination, usual only in writers of the first rank, of acute and exact sensuousness with something important to say.

When I heard of Jim Agee's death, the platitudes about "shock" and "loss" became real. A friend I had for many years respected intellectually and sympathised with emotionally and disapproved of temperamentally and been stimulated by conversationally had vanished forever. I had always thought of Jim as the most broadly gifted American writer of my generation, the one who, if anybody pulled it off, might one day write a great book. He wrote many superb pages but not the book. He really shouldn't have died, I kept thinking. It was much too soon. Although *A Death in the Family* is a novel on an intensely personal theme—the crisis in the Agee family after the father was killed in an automobile accident; Agee was seven at the time—it is written with an objectivity and control he had not achieved before. It shows that Agee had the technical, intellectual, and moral equipment to do major writing. By "moral," which has a terribly old-fashioned ring, I mean that he believed in and—what is rarer—was interested in good and evil. Lots of writers are fascinated by evil and write copiously about it, but they are bored by virtue; this not only limits their scope but also prevents them from giving a satisfactory account of evil. In the novel, Jay Follett is a good husband and father, Mary is a good wife and mother, and their goodness is expressed in concrete actions, as is the evil of the boys who humiliate their son, or the lack of "character" Jay's brother, Ralph, shows in the crisis. ("Character" is another old-fashioned quality that interested Agee.) The theme is the confrontation of love, that is life carried to its highest possible reach, and death, as the negation of life and yet a necessary part of it. Only a major writer could rise to such a theme.

ALTHOUGH AGEE ACHIEVED much, by ordinary standards, he was not ordinary, and his achievement came far short of his potentialities. He had a positive genius for the wasteful and the self-

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HODDER AND STOUGHTON

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destructive, always ready to sit up all night with anyone who happened to be around, or to go out at midnight looking for someone—talking passionately, brilliantly, but too much, drinking too much, smoking too much, reading aloud too much, making love too much, and in general cultivating the worst set of work habits in Greenwich Village. This is a large statement, but Agee's was a large personality. "I wish I knew how to work," he said to a friend. He wrote copiously, spending himself recklessly there, too, but he seemed to have no sense of self-preservation, allowing his versatility and creative energy to be exploited in a way that shrewder, cooler men of talent don't permit. His getting stuck for so long in the Luce organisation is an instance; like Jacob, he drudged fourteen years in another man's fields, but there was no Rachel in view.

> "Jim seemed to want to punish himself [another friend says]. He complicated his creative life so much that he was rarely able to come to simple fulfilment. He would put off work until he got far enough behind to feel satisfactorily burdened with guilt. Somehow he managed to turn even his virtues into weaknesses. Jim was bigger than life, had enormous energy—my God, the man was inexhaustible! He reacted excessively to *everything*. The trouble was he couldn't say No. He let people invade him, all kinds, anyone who wanted to. He thought he had time and energy enough for them all. But he didn't, quite. His heart trouble began on Huston's ranch out West, when he was working with him on the script of *The African Queen*. Huston was in the habit of playing two or three sets of singles before breakfast—*he* was a prodigal live-it-upper, too; that was one reason they got on so well together—and Agee, who hadn't played in years and was out of condition, went at it with him every morning, trying for every shot, until he collapsed on the court with his first heart attack. The doctors told Jim to take it easy, to drink, smoke, and live moderately. But that was the one talent he didn't have."

The waste one senses in Agee's career had other roots as well. He was spectacularly born in the wrong time and place. He was too versatile, for one thing. In art as in industry, this is an age of specialisation. There is a definite if restricted "place" for poetry; there is even a Pulitzer Prize for it, and poets of far less capacity than Agee have made neat, firm little reputations. But his best poetry is written in prose and scattered through his three books. Nor was he solely dedicated to literature. Music was also important to him, and the cinema, so closely related to music, was his first love, and his last. I think he never gave up the dream of becoming a director, of expressing himself directly with images and rhythm instead of making do at one remove with words. His best writing has a cinematic flow and immediacy; his worst has a desperate, clotted quality, as though he felt that nobody would "get" him and was trying to break through, irritatedly, by brute exaggeration and repetition. But he was typed as a writer, and the nearest he could come to making movies was to write scripts—scripts that go far beyond what is usual in the way of precise indications as to sequence of shots, camera angles, visual details (the raindrops on a leaf are described in one), and other matters normally decided by the director. They are the scripts of a frustrated director.

The times—and the place—might have done better by Agee. American culture was not structured enough for Agee's special needs; it was over-specialised as to function but amorphous as to values. He needed definition, limitation, discipline, but he found no firm tradition, no community of artists and intellectuals that would canalise his energies. One thinks of D. H. Lawrence, similar to Agee in his rebellious irrationalism, who was forced to define his own values and his own special kind of writing precisely because of the hard, clear, well-developed cultural tradition he reacted so strongly against.

If his native land offered Agee no tradition to direct his sprawling talents, no cultural community to moderate his eccentricities, it did provide "movements," political and æsthetic. Unfortunately, he couldn't sympathise with any of them. He was always unfashionable. His verse was rather conventional and romantic. In the foreword to *Permit Me Voyage*, Archibald MacLeish, an expert on literary fashions himself, accurately predicted, "It will not excite the new-generationers, left wing or right.... Agee does not assume... a Position." Ideologically, it was even worse. In an age that was enthusiastic about social issues, Agee's whole style of being was individualistic and anti-scientific. He was quite aware of this; oddly, considering the constellation of his traits, he had a strong bent towards ideas. Unlike, say, Thomas Wolfe, whom he resembled in some ways, he was an intellectual; it was another aspect of his versatility.

As MacLeish observed, Agee appealed neither to the Left nor to the Right. "I am a Communist by sympathy and conviction," he wrote in the 'thirties, and at once went on to put a tactless finger right on the sore point:

> But it does not appear (just for one thing) that Communists have recognised or in any case made anything serious of the sure fact that the persistence of what once was insufficiently described as Pride, a mortal sin, can quite as coldly and inevitably damage and wreck the human race as the most total power of "Greed"

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> ever could: and that socially anyhow, the most dangerous form of pride is neither arrogance nor humility, but its mild, common denominator form, complacency. . . . Artists, for instance, should be capable of figuring the situation out to the degree that they would refuse the social eminence and the high pay they are given in Soviet Russia. The setting up of an aristocracy of superior workers is no good sign, either.

The idiom ("the sure fact . . . figuring the situtation out . . . no good sign, either") and the rhythm are in the American vernacular, and thus out of key with the style in which everybody else wrote about these matters then. Nor was Agee any more congruous with the Right. Although he was deeply religious, his kind of religion included irreverence, blasphemy, obscenity, and even Communism (of his own kind). By the late 'forties, a religio-conservative revival was under way, but Agee felt as out of place as ever. "If my shapeless comments can be of any interest or use," he characteristically began his contribution to a *Partisan Review* symposium on Religion for the Intellectuals, "it will be because the amateur and the amphibian should be represented in such a discussion. By amphibian I mean that I have a religious background and am 'pro-religious'—though not on the whole delighted by this so-called revival—but doubt that I will return to religion." Amateurs don't flourish in an age of specialisation, or amphibians in a time when educated armies clash by night.

THE INCOMPATIBILITY of Agee and his times came to a head in the sensational failure of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. It is a miscellaneous book, as hard to classify as that earlier failure *Moby Dick*, which it resembles, being written in a "big" style and drawing poetry from journalistic description. It is mostly a documentary account of three Southern tenant-farming families, illustrated with thirty-one magisterial photographs by Walker Evans, Agee's close friend, who was also enough involved in the writing—and the editing—to appear on the title-page as co-author. But it is many other things—philosophy, narrative, satire, cultural history, and autobiography. It is a young man's book—exuberant, angry, tender, wilful to the point of perversity, with the most amazing variations in quality; most of it is extremely good, some of it is as great prose as we have had since Hawthorne, and some of it is turgid, mawkish, overwritten. But from it emerges a truth that includes and goes beyond the truth about poverty and ignorance in sociological studies (and "realistic" novels), the truth that squalid lives, imaginatively observed, are also touched with poetry, comedy, drama, and nobility.

The book grew out of an assignment to Agee and Evans from *Fortune* in 1936 to do a story on Southern sharecroppers. For two months they lived in the Alabama back country. *Fortune*, not surprisingly, couldn't use the article. Harper's then staked Agee to a year off the Luce payroll to write the book. When it was done, they couldn't use it, either; they wanted deletions in the interests of "good taste," and Agee refused; since the higher-ups weren't enthusiastic anyway about this strange, difficult work, Harper's stood firm. Finally, Houghton Mifflin brought it out in 1941. The critics disliked it—Selden Rodman, Lionel Trilling, and George Marion O'Donnell were honourable exceptions—and it sold less than six hundred copies the first year. *Moby Dick* sold five hundred, which was six times as good a showing, taking into account the increase of population.

THE MISCHANCE THAT DOGGED Agee's career is evident in the timing of his death. Those who knew him best say that in the last few years of his life Agee changed greatly, became more mature, more aware of himself and of others, shrewder about his particular talents and problems. In the very last year, he had even begun to pay some attention to doctors' orders. He was by then getting such good fees for scripts that he was looking forward to doing only one a year and spending the rest of the time on his own writing. He might even have found out who he was. *A Death in the Family* contrasts significantly with *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*: the later book is written in a more controlled and uniform style; it has more humour and none of the self-consciousness that often embarrasses one in the earlier work; its structure is classical, without Gothic excrescences; and human beings are seen objectively. (With all its faults, however, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is the book that Agee's literary reputation mainly rests on.) There is also the remarkable short story, "A Mother's Tale,"[2] he wrote three years before his death: a Kafka-like allegory, perfectly ordered and harmonious all through, of the human situation in this age of total war. I think only a thoroughly developed writer could have done it. Like Keats, Agee died just when he was beginning to mature. That Keats was twenty-five and Agee forty-five doesn't alter the point. Agee was an American, of a race that matures slowly, if ever.

> He was at his best just short of his excesses, and he tended in general to work out towards

[2] Published in ENCOUNTER, April, 1958.

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Memory Unlimited

I JUMPED into the first railway compartment which seemed empty: my eyes fell on a book left on the seat opposite by a previous passenger.

I took it up absent-mindedly and ran through the first lines. Five minutes later I was reading it as eagerly as a clue to a hidden treasure. I learned that everyone's memory is capable of fantastic feats; that an ordinary person if he has taught himself to control the way in which his brain stores impressions can memorize accurately long and complicated lists of facts after reading them over only once or twice. I thought I would test the truth of the statement.

I took a timetable out of my suitcase and began reading quietly in the manner prescribed, the names of about one hundred railway stations. I observed that, after reading them over a few times, I could recite the whole list off with hardly a mistake. With a little more practice I found I had committed them so completely to memory that I could remember them in the reverse order and even pick out one station from the list and say which number it was, and what were the names of the towns before and after it.

I was astonished at the memory I had acquired and spent the rest of my journey on more and more difficult experiments in memory, and reflecting how this new control I was achieving over my mind would materially help me to a greater success in life. After this, I worked hard at this wonderful memory system, and within a week I found I could recall passages from books and quote them with ease; names, addresses and business appointments were remembered immediately; and in four months I had succeeded in learning Spanish.

If I have obtained from life a measure of wealth and happiness, it is to that book I owe it, for it revealed to me the workings of my brain.

Three years ago, I had the good fortune to meet its author, G. P. Borg, and I promised him to propagate his method, and today I am glad of this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to him.

I can only suppose that others wish to acquire what is, after all, the most valuable asset towards success in life.

Borg's address is: G. P. Borg, *c/o* Aubanel Publishers, 14 Highfield Road, Dublin 6, Ireland. Apply to him for his little book, "The Eternal Laws of Success." It is free to all who wish to develop their memory.

F. ROBERTS

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> the dangerous edge. He was capable of realism ... but essentially he was a poet.... He had an exorbitant appetite for violence, for cruelty, and for the Siamese twin of cruelty, a kind of obsessive tenderness which at its worst was all but nauseating.... In his no longer fashionable way, he remained capable, and inspired. He was merely unadaptable and unemployable, like an old, sore, ardent individualist among contemporary progressives.... He didn't have it in him to be amenable, even if he tried.

So Agee wrote after D. W. Griffith died. He may have been describing the film director. He was certainly describing himself.

THIS FALL Braziller is publishing *The Letters of James Agee to Father Flye*. It is a remarkable collection, running from 1925, when Agee entered Phillips Exeter Academy, to a week before he died. Father Flye is an Episcopalian priest whom Agee first knew at the age of nine, as his pupil at St. Andrew's School, and who became a substitute for the father he had lost three years earlier. ("Dear Father" each letter naturally begins, a Freudian pun that hardly bears thinking of.) Reading these letters stimulated me to dig up some of Agee's letters to me when we were both young cinéastes—and also to a few memories and reflections.

We both had the good luck to go to Exeter, which at the time had an extraordinary English department which taught us a lot about writing. Jim and I just missed each other at Exeter, I graduating in 1924 and he arriving the next year. I don't remember how we first got in touch, perhaps through one of our English teachers, but we began corresponding in 1929. Agee was then a freshman at Harvard and I, just out of Yale, was working on Henry Luce's new magazine, *Fortune*. Our letters were about books and movies, especially the latter—we both wanted to be directors.

> A fellow in my dormitory [he wrote me in the spring of 1929] owns a movie camera (not the sort you set buzzing and jam into the diaphragm) and has done some interesting work with it.... It's possible we'll make two movies: one a sort of *$24 Island* of Boston. There's no chance for such beautiful stuff as Flaherty got in that, but Boston has a real individuality that may be fun to try to photograph. The idea is that I'll devise shots, angles, camera-work, etc.—and stories; he'll take care of the photography and lighting. The other thing is a story I wrote last fall.... It wouldn't be very expensive: we intend to make it in 3 reels; it would be necessary to hire 2 tenement rooms for a while. Here's one thing I particularly like:
>
> The man has found his wife in a faint on the floor. He carries her into the dark bedroom: a quick close-up shows his hand groping for the light; he turns it on and it begins a violent swinging. He puts her on the bed and stands above her for a moment. The audience has reason to believe that a discovery is imminent which will mean hell for the wife. The camera now peers round his back and discovers her lying beneath the swinging, bending shadow thrown by the moving light....
>
> I'm trying to write a paper on the possibilities of the talkies—which I despise. Nevertheless great things (not in the movie manner) could be done with them. Both depend on the possibility of fusing pictures, sound, and in one case colour, into a unity. One is that they could be a fulfilment of all that Blake wanted to do—great pictures, poetry, colour, and music. The other is the chance they offer Joyce and his followers. I should think they'd go wild over the possibilities of it. I wrote a story last spring which I'd give anything to make as a "test case"—but I somehow feel a traitor to the movies as they should be even to think of such things.

We both admired Griffith, Chaplin, Stroheim, the Russians, the Germans; and we both despised the big Hollywood productions, although we kept looking for signs of life there, sometimes rather desperately, as when Jim asked "Ever noticed Dorothy Mackaill? Along the general lines of Esther Ralston"—which was intended as a compliment. We also wrote about our literary discoveries, since we were, after all, writers. These often discordant notes are all struck in a letter a month later. After dismissing Whitman—under the influence, I'm afraid, of an over-enthusiastic essay of mine on Robinson Jeffers, whom I'd praised at the expense of Whitman, Eliot, Frost, and several other poets whose names I'd just as soon not recall—as "generally half-assed to me now," he continued:

> I have a rather conventional fondness—which I hope I'll never outlive—for A. E. Housman. It amounts at present more nearly to worship. [One imagines he saw in Housman's laconic, constricted literary personality a needed corrective to his own.] I've got to the point where I try to read his Latin annotations on Marcus Manilius.... He tears every scholar (Bentley and Scaliger excepted) to small pieces—with the most savage and beautiful sarcasm I've ever seen.
>
> Saw a movie to-day—*Hearts in Dixie* was its unfortunate title. The thing itself struck me as pretty swell; there was no camera work and very little else to recommend it from the real director's point of view, but it's an extremely honest and interesting study of southern country negroes. I liked it better than *Porgy*....
>
> One of the really stinko Movies of All Time, as they advertise, was *Noah's Ark*.... Even George O'Brien was lousy.... The only possible way such a mess could be good was as a spectacle, and such scenes were the worst I've ever seen, very carelessly handled, with Dolores realistically if ignominiously skidding along the flood on her coccyx.

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FABER & FABER

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A really good movie (which cost I suppose a tenth as much) is *The Shopworn Angel*. Unlike most new directors given half a chance, this one didn't mess the thing up with a profusion of dissolves and truck-shots. But he told the story and characterised extremely well. It wasn't in the least pretentious . . . another good sign the movies are maturing. . . .

I'm going to spend the summer working in the wheatfields, starting in Oklahoma in June. The thing looks good in every way. I like to get drunk and will; I like to sing and learn dirty songs and hobo ones—and will; I like to be on my own—the farther from home the better—and will. . . . Also I like bumming. . . . Finally, I like saving money and this promises from $5 to $7 a day.

That summer I got a pencil-scrawled note dated "Oshkosh, Nebraska, maybe August 1":

Am now working at hauling and scooping grain on a "combine" crew. . . . Kansas is the most utterly lousy state I've ever seen. Hot as hell and trees ten miles apart. I worked near a town which proudly bore the name "Glade" because of a clump of scrawny, dusty little trees it had somehow managed to assemble.

The first town across the Nebraska line was so different I declared a holiday, sat on a bench in the court-house park and wrote a story. I rather think I've stumbled on to the best possible surroundings and state of mind in which to write. I certainly was more at home with it than at Harvard, home, or Exeter. . . .

IN HIS EXCELLENT introduction to the Father Flye letters, Robert Phelps states that Agee got his job on *Fortune* because the editors were impressed by a parody of *Time* he had published in the *Harvard Advocate*. I wish this were the whole story, since it might have been better had Agee never become an employee of Time, Inc. But I remember talking with the editor of *Fortune* about Jim, who was about to graduate from Harvard and was looking for a job. And I find a letter written in that spring of 1932:

Noted contents of your letter with eyes rolling upward and stomach downward with joy, relief, gratitude, and such things. I shall send a wire in the morning to beat this letter down. I don't want to miss any chances of losing this chance (for which thank you, God and Managing Editor Ingersoll). . . .

My chief business has been reading, writing, and (thanks to a generous and evil-intentioned friend) Solitary Drinking. The reading has been mostly spread-eagle: Swift, Marston, "Troilus and Criseyde," and "The Apes of God." The writing has been mostly (a) a good start on a rather chaotic, messy play about two decaying girls and assorted boy friends, (b) a bad start on what should be a great play if I were a great playwright (I stole the plot from Marston and in trying to account for Elizabethan extravagances in 1930 life the whole thing has gone too Dostoevsky for the stage), and (c) about 250 lines of a new somewhat cockeyed narrative poem. The poetry is, on the whole, a flop, but I'm fool enough to have faith in the idea: vaguely—that I can take a somewhat stock bawdy situation, fit it to characters common to Chaucer and to Midwest "realistic" novels, and make something of it Chaucer at best wouldn't vomit on. Only it would seem to take practice, very careful study, and about 10 times the talent and 5 times the guts I have, to do it. The Solitary Drinking has proceeded, quietly but firmly, throughout: modest but effective—alcohol, water, juniper juice and lemon. . . . *Scarface* very disappointing but with its swell moments. . . . *The Crowd Roars* very nice story-telling. . . .

Words fail me re The Job: besides the fairly fundamental fact that I don't want to starve. There are dozens of other reasons I want *uh* job and many more why I am delighted to get this one.

Dramatic irony, the audience knowing what the actors don't about how it's going to turn out, could hardly be carried further. And I didn't do him a favour, really. Agee might have found another way of wasting his talents—he was fertile in such devices—but writing for *Time* and *Fortune* was the one he did discover. The tragi-comedy was not all one-sided. Luce's editors never knew just how to exploit this strange, brilliant creature. I have already mentioned their rejection—at considerable financial loss to Time, Inc.—of the one article in which he gave his best and his all (that was just the trouble, of course), namely the article on Southern sharecroppers from which later developed *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. And there was an earlier episode. When he first arrived at *Fortune*, Agee at once became, mostly because nobody could think of any other use for him, the magazine's specialist on what we used to call Rich Beautiful Prose. He fabricated R.B.P. on such topics as Rare Wines, Famous Orchid Collections, and The World's Ten Most Precious Jewels. When this finally reached the attention of Luce, he was indignant for several reasons: (1) he had a theory that a good writer should be able to handle any topic better (for *Fortune*'s purposes) than the experts, which is why the early staff writers, like Agee and myself, were hired purely for their supposed literary talents; (2) *Fortune* was, after all, a magazine about business enterprise; and (3) Luce thought it self-indulgent if not downright immoral for a writer to confine himself to topics that he enjoyed writing about—there was a lot of the Puritan in Luce. So he assigned to Agee an article on "The Price of Steel Rails" and furthermore announced that he, Luce, would personally edit it. The topic was a fascinating one to anybody with the slightest interest in economics, since the price had been exactly $47.65 a ton (or some such figure) for some fifty

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years and was a classic example of monopolistic price-fixing. But Agee had not even a slight interest in economics. He did his best and Luce did his best ("Now, Jim, don't you see . . . ?") but at last even Luce had to admit defeat and the article was assigned to someone else, maybe myself, who did a workmanlike sensible job. Agee's problem as a journalist was that he couldn't be just workmanlike and sensible; he had to give it everything he had, which was not good for him and not practical for his editors. There is, after all, only a limited mileage to be gotten out of Famous Orchid Collections. But of course the editors at Time, Inc., did manage to find other uses for their tame genius —they came out of the deal better than he did, as might be expected—such as writing *Time* "cover stories" on movie actresses.

ONE MORE EXTRACT, from a letter Jim wrote me in 1936, may give some idea of a side of his temperament which for the most part was expressed verbally and late at night:

> "It seems to me, comrades, that *New Masses* readers should treat Dostoevsky kindly and yet strictly. There are inexcusable gaps and deviations in his ideology and they must not be condoned; on the other hand, we must not on their account make any enemy of a man who has come far and who may turn out to be inestimably useful to The Movement" (signed) Granville Hicks [then a prominent Marxian critic of the Stalinist persuasion] . . . .
>
> For myself, I think *The Brothers Karamazov* deserves the co-operation of all the finest talents in Hollywood and would richly repay all research and expenditure. A full-sized replica, complete down to the last tpmizznmst, of the Mad Tsar Pierre (Charles Laughton). Papa Karamazov (Lionel Barrymore). His comic servant, Grigory (Wallace Beery). Grigory's wife (Zazu Pitts). Smerdyakov (Charles Laughton). Smerdyakov's familiar, a cat named Tabitha (Elsa Lanchester, the bride of Frankenstein). Zossima (Henry B. Walthall). . . . Entire production supervised by Hugh Walpole. . . . To be played on the world's first Globular Screen, opening at the Hippodrome the night before *Jumbo* closes. Mr. Dostoevsky will be unable to appear at the opening but Charles A. Lindbergh has agreed to be on hand (you may recognise him by the smoked glasses and unassuming manner). . . . President Roosevelt will plant a tree. The Italian Expeditionary Force to Ethiopia will observe two minutes' silence in honour of the birth of the little Christ child. Artificial foreskins will be handed out at the north end of the Wilhelmstrasse to anyone who is fool enough to call for them. The film will be preceded by *Glimpses of the New Russia*, photographed by M. Bourkeovitz [Margaret Bourke-White, *Fortune*'s top photographer, had married Erskine Caldwell, then no foe of the Soviet Union, and had published some such books of photographs] and edited by John Martin and Laird Goldsborough [Luce editors whose politics ran in the opposite direction]. Suggested tie-ins for hinterland exhibitors: arrange to have your theatre picketed by your local chapters of the American Legion, the Catholic Church, the Parent-Teachers' Association, the Sheetmetal Workers' Union, and the Youth-for-Peace movement. Set up jungle shrubbery and a stuffed gorilla in your lobby (your local Police Station will be glad to furnish latter in return for a mention). If you are in the South, stage Negro baptism (in white gowns) in front of your theatre. If in North, an Italian Saint's Day or a Jewish Funeral will do as well. Plug this feature hard. It will richly repay you.

Until I came to transcribe this, I had not realised how tasteless it is, deliberately offending the sensibilities of almost every minority—and majority—group in the country. Its buffoonery expresses a nihilistic attitude that is wholly un-American, not to mention un-Hollywoodian, un-Italian, un-Jewish, un-Nazi, un-Communist, un-Catholic, and un-Progressive. And why drag in the Sheet Metal Workers' Union? Or the cops? There is something very old-fashioned about the whole thing, more like 1926 than 1936 and certainly not at all like 1962. A period piece.

ONE OF THE UNEXPECTED things about Jim Agee —and there were many, he was what used to

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be called "an original"—was that he was able to think in general terms without making a fool of himself, therein differing from most American "creative writers" of this century. This may have been because he had a good education or, more likely, because he had a gift that way. (He had so many gifts, including such odd ones—for intellectuals—as feeling and reverence.) Considering his hell-for-leather temperament, Agee was a sophisticated, even a circumspect thinker. Thus he added in that 1929 letter, after going along with my juvenile dismissal of Walt Whitman, "Yes—but at the time it was the best thing that could possibly have happened to American writing." Jim was too easily influenced, because he was imaginative, but for the same reason he constantly corrected himself. "Was just reading in *New Masses* Isidore Schneider welcoming Archie into the new pew," he wrote me in 1936.[3] "Still have my ways of believing in art-for-art and, more especially, my conviction that Marx—Marx plus Freud for that matter—isn't the answer to everything." Then he adds, with typical balance, the last quality one would expect if one merely saw his picturesque side: "But just because Copernicus didn't settle all the problems of the universe is no reason at all to go on insisting that the sun moves around the earth and comes out a little south-west of purgatory." Jim was always moderate in an immoderate way, he was always out of step, and he had very little respect for the *zeitgeist*. It was his tragedy, and his triumph. He was also, as I have already noted, peculiarly unfortunate in his period. What bad luck, for instance, that he should have written movie criticism in 1943–48, a time when, except for Italian neo-realism, almost nothing interesting was being done anywhere; ten years later, the cinema, finally recovering from the shock of sound in 1930, was beginning that recovery which has made it the contemporary rival of the novel and the theatre.

IN HIS LAST LETTER to Father Flye, written shortly before his death, Agee sketches out a fantasy about elephants—how they have been degraded by modern civilisation from the noblest and most intelligent of beasts to figures of fun in circuses. He may have felt he was dying; at any rate, this was his last and most penetrating insight. For wasn't this just what happened to him? Wasn't he also a large, powerful, intelligent being who was put to base uses? The same note is struck in his parable, "A Mother's Tale," also written towards the end of his life, in which a cow tells her children and grandchildren and nephews and nieces a legend that has come down through the generations about their ultimate fate and about the one hero of their kind who rebelled and escaped to bring back the tale to the cattle ranges. May not Agee here too have been thinking of himself? Cattle have their own life and purpose but are used by more powerful beings for a different purpose. This, at least, is how I imagine he may have felt about himself in later years.

Although "A Mother's Tale" is emotionally true, something else must be said. While Time, Inc., has one important thing in common with the Chicago packing-houses—that its purpose is to convert something living, namely talent, into a saleable commodity—it is not really an abbatoir because those who, like Agee or myself, took its pay-cheques did so of their own free-will. Not like, in this sense, the cattle or the elephants. The important question is, as Lenin once remarked of politics, who uses whom (I think he had a more pungent verb in the original Russian). It is possible to use instead of to be used, as Faulkner demonstrated during the years he wrote scripts in Hollywood in order to finance time off to write his novels. But Agee didn't have this kind of self-preservative toughness, which comes only from a clear knowledge of what one really wants to do. His talent was too varied, unfocused and, indeed, too large.

There is something helpless about elephants precisely because of their combination of size and intelligence; it is a fact they can be tamed and trained more easily than other wild animals. It's not the tamers' fault. Henry Luce was a very decent fellow when Jim and I worked for him on *Fortune* in the 'thirties, and I'm sure Luce was, as I was, charmed and impressed by Jim. But still, what a waste, what illusions! As late as 1945, after thirteen years with Time, Inc., Agee can still write to Father Flye, and not in despair but hopefully, that he has been offered a new job: "free-lance writing through all parts of the magazine." (For a writer to be given the run of *Time* is like an art collector being offered his pick of figures from Madame Tussaud's museum.) He was constantly looking for a way out—in his first year on *Fortune* he thinks of applying for a Guggenheim Fellowship, two years later he is asking Father Flye about chances for a teaching job at St. Andrew's, etc.—but he was also always full of innocent, elephantine hope.

[3] The reference is to Archibald MacLeish who had, under pressure from the *zeitgeist*, edged over towards the Communists. Four years later the war had begun—nobody ever had to ask Archie, "Don't you know there's a war on?"—and MacLeish was attacking Dos Passos, Farrell, Hemingway, and practically all our other serious writers as "The Irresponsibles" who had betrayed The American Dream by trying to wake us up from it. Shortly thereafter, he was running Roosevelt's Office of Facts and Figures, as our wartime propaganda agency was at first quaintly called.

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Canetti's Crowd

Crowds and Power. By ELIAS CANETTI. *Gollancz*, 42s.

KULTURPHILOSOPHIE is a crucial, untranslatable term. It is rooted in the characteristic nineteenth-century search for the quasi-theology. Lacking a dogma or orthodoxy of transcendent values, fascinated by the legislative and predictive powers of the natural sciences, the nineteenth century strove for a new centre, for a pivot from which to organise the growing vastness of material and psychological fact. It is the classic century of the systematic fragment, of gossamer structures of principles and ideas spun grandly but precariously over the dynamic recalcitrant matter of logic, history, and aesthetics. We look back on the "Constructive Coadunative Philosophy" of Coleridge, on the triads of Hegel, on the pre-sociologies of Michelet and Taine, on the proud bizarre edifice of Comte's theory of history, as on a gallery of cob-webs. Of this unembarrassed striving after total vision, only the foresight of Tocqueville and the uncanny clairvoyance of Nietzsche retain their pertinence.

But this obsession with philosophic constructs, with "totalisations" and theoretic designs—an obsession as explicit in the aesthetics of Wagner as it is in the economics of Marx—gave impulse to a fascinating mode of argument and inquiry, a kind of middle ground between the imaginative and the analytic. *Kulturphilosophie*—the speculative re-enactment or ordering of historical totality in a manner at once metaphysical, sociological, and poetic—has an essentially German and Central European flavour. The leviathan drift of Toynbee and the austere reveries of Lévi-Strauss show that there are *Kulturphilosophen* elsewhere. But the tradition is Germanic. It derives from Hegel, Nietzsche, and Burckhardt; it is vital in the late works of Freud. We owe to it the writings of Karl Kraus, Walter Benjamin, T. W. Adorno, and Hannah Arendt. Spengler carried the *genre* to an absolute which neighbours parody.

The English reflex, here very distinct from the American, tends to be one of irony or boredom. As Hazlitt wrote of Coleridge's scheme of organic idealism: "It is well observed by Hobbes, that 'it is by means of words only that a man becometh excellently wise or excellently foolish.'" There are two reasons for this view. In the empirical tradition (the reference to Hobbes is apt) fields of knowledge and methods of inquiry are, wherever possible, kept distinct. The jaundiced distrust with which the academic polity in England continues to regard sociology, derives precisely from a sense of orderly discriminations. Things are not to be jumbled. History, psychology, economics, geography and political science have their several vocabularies and functions. The *Kulturphilosoph* is, by definition, a muddler.

But there is a second, more covert objection. In English parlance, "fine writing" is a compliment one must guard against. The modern English temper distrusts elegance or passion or style in serious prose nearly as much as it distrusts comfort. The history of Macaulay's reputation is striking proof. A grey, neutral discourse is taken for warrant of professional integrity. It is, in significant part, because of their stylistic genius, of their resolve to make of historical or political argument a high literary art, that Carlyle and Ruskin are dismissed from practical study. Having behind them an idiosyncratic pressure of style, their complex and often responsible ideas are viewed as archaic moonshine.

But as Coleridge insisted, the verb "to know" is active; and style is language in action—trying, probing, giving articulate shape to the potential of consciousness. *The Kulturphilosoph* (Nietzsche is an obvious instance) makes of his style, of the syntax of his argument, a concordant reality. The thing said cannot be dissociated from the manner of the saying. It cannot be readily paraphrased. In every major attempt at *Kulturphilosophie* lies a poetic, and a vivid margin of untranslatability. To the professional philosopher and academic historian, this obtrusive primacy of style is repellent.

Indeed, the notion of "the professional" is crucial: being part artist, part rhetorician, part philosopher, the *Kulturphilosoph* is often an amateur, an outsider. Often, also, he is the builder of a single, omnivorous, oddly organised book (one thinks of Spengler and Weininger). The rest of his writings will be erratic blocks on the site of the total edifice. In the case of Coleridge, the blocks are real and the building—the *omnium*, the System of the Logos—is shadow. As he passes this *terrain vague* (the connotations of the French term are exactly right), the professional wrinkles his nose. And here also, French, with its Cartesian arrogance of clarity, has the precise dismissal: *ce n'est que de la littérature.*

CANETTI's book *is* literature. Emphatically. His previous work is a novel. Since its publication in 1935, *Die Blendung* (published in English under the curious title, *Auto-da-Fé*) has led a strong, underground life of admiration. It is a macabre parable of bibliomania, erotic servitude, and agoraphobia. The bibliography of Canetti's new book, *Masse und Macht*, suggests exactly the kind of quirky, immensely erudite library

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in which the hero of the novel passed his harassed existence. It ranges from Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* to A. Dalzel's *History of Dahomey* (1793) and P. E. Williams' *The Vailala Madness* (Port Moresby, 1923).

Being a writer, Canetti thinks principally by leap of image. This is one of the defining traits of *Kulturphilosophie*. Where the specific or traditional discipline proceeds by argument marshalled and qualified, the large designs of "cultural philosophy" converge towards image and metaphor. It is a failure to appreciate the particular reach of argument by metaphor which accounts for the misunderstandings, for the misreadings through literalism, of much of the finest of Nietzsche or Karl Kraus. There is little use reading *Zarathustra* or *Die Letzten Tage der Menscheit* without steady awareness that the argument is metaphoric, that it makes the provisional claims of myth and image.

The same awareness is relevant to Canetti. He has set out to write a particular gloss on the more general text of violence. He is concerned —nearly obsessed—with the authority of violence, organised or ungoverned, in the fabric and crises of human action. To Canetti, the play of inhumane forces which characterises both primitive society and modern politics, and of which war is only a detailed instance, can be centred in the interaction of Crowd and Power (the capitals, as Carlyle knew, are helpful; they translate into English something of the German sense of linguistic absolutes).

Canetti's analysis of the nature and origin of crowds is brilliant. Metaphor allows a margin of assent even where one queries the underlying structure. It is difficult to see where the precise lines of distinction fall between the Hunting Pack and the War Pack. Indeed, the relation between chase and battle is often more oblique than Canetti allows; evidence gathered by anthropologists in New Guinea suggests that there is in primitive warfare an element of play radically different from the ritual earnestness of the hunt. Nor am I persuaded by Canetti's theory of the solitude of the individual Catholic within the fabric of communion. But it is not the general system that matters most; it is the local, imaginative insights.

In a chapter of analogues, Canetti examines non-human paradigms of the Crowd. Through their mobile, additive, encroaching quality, corn and forest, rain, wind, sand, sea and fire are Crowd. Fire, in particular, is the organic counterpart to the self-generating, destructive dynamism of the human multitude. Hence, argues Canetti, the fire-trance of the Navajos or the ecstatic self-immolation of beleaguered cities and maddened religious sects. The Crowd becomes fire. But there are subtler images of the ravenous, uniform, blind scurry and moil of the urban pack. The mysterious, statistically absurd rush of human spermatozoa suggests to Canetti arresting conjectures about waste and survival.

He seeks to divide nations by their Crowd-symbolism:

> The crowd symbol of the Germans was the *army*. But the army was more than just the army; it was the *marching forest*. In no other modern country has the forest-feeling remained as alive as it has in Germany. The parallel rigidity of the upright trees and their density and number fill the heart of the German with a deep and mysterious delight. To this day he loves to go deep into the forest where his forefathers lived; he feels at one with the trees.
>
> Their orderly separation and the stress on the vertical distinguish this forest from the tropical kind where creepers grow in all directions. In tropical forests the eye loses itself in the foreground; there is a chaotic and unarticulated mass of growth, full of colour and life, which effectively precludes any sensation of order, or even of repetition. The forests of the temperate zone, on the other hand, have a conspicuous rhythm. The eye moves along lines of clearly visible trees into a uniform distance. Each individual tree is always taller than a man and goes on growing until it becomes a giant. Its steadfastness has much in common with the same virtue in a warrior. In a single tree the bark resembles a coat of mail; in a whole forest, where there are many trees of the same kind growing together, it suggests rather the uniforms of an army. For the German, without his being clearly aware of it it, army and forest transfused each other in every possible way.

Objections spring to mind; why did the North American forest act as a medium for solitude, as a catalyst to the anarchic, irreverent cunning of the pathfinder and frontiersman? Canetti asserts that desert-wandering—the voyaging multitude in a sea of sand—is the archetype of Jewish consciousness; yet the latter was moulded, no less profoundly, by the confinement and labyrinth of the urban ghetto.

But it is naïve to quarrel with metaphor. Canetti's proposals are incitements to the imagination. At times, moreover, he seems overwhelmingly right. His analysis of the links between the monetary devaluation of the 1930s and the rise of murderous crowd-hysteria, is a classic of poetic, sociological insight. When millions signify nothing in terms of money, they start signifying little in terms of life:

> No one forgets a sudden depreciation of himself, for it is too painful. Unless he can thrust it on to someone else, he carries it with him for the rest of his life. And the crowd as such never forgets its depreciation. The natural tendency afterwards is to find something which is worth even less than oneself, which one can despise as one was

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despised oneself. It is not enough to take over an old contempt and to maintain it at the same level. What is wanted is a dynamic process of humiliation.

The German mass turned readily against those who were thought to be on special, favourable terms with money—the Jews. One could, in fact, go beyond Canetti and write a history of the concordance between monetary inflation and the brutalisation of social values.

Part II, the study of Power, is less exciting. The concept of the autocratic leader as the man who has survived the Crowd, is intriguing but sketchy. The spermatozoa-image lurks unconvincingly in the background. Some of Canetti's most revealing points have been anticipated, though the echo is, no doubt, accidental: his study of the irrational tyrant, of the kneeling and prone posture and of the complex solitude of executioner and victim, parallel ideas put forward in Wittfogel's great work, *Oriental Despotism*. More disturbing is the lofty dismissal of Freud which Canetti appends to his own, rather flat treatment of the notorious Schreber case.

For all its scope, *Crowds and Power*—Crowd, singular, would be more exact—gives the impression of a fragment, of being a part of work in progress. Like a number of recent books of *Kulturphilosophie*, it probes towards the centre of the primary question of modern social theory: what went wrong in the structure of western civilisation and humane literacy to allow the eruption of political barbarism? What road led from Goethe to Belsen, from Voltaire to torture in Algeria? Does literacy of intellect provoke in the psyche a counter-stroke of savagery? One cannot begin to speak seriously of the future of culture or society without asking this question. Like Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* and Bettelheim's *The Informed Heart*, Canetti's uneven but immensely perceptive essay will help us ask it more precisely. This is one of the necessary prefaces to a study of the inhuman.

George Steiner

Unamuno's Sense of Life

The Tragic Sense of Life. By MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. *Collins Fontana Library*, 8s. 6d.

Unamuno, A Philosophy of Tragedy. By JOSÉ FERRATER MORA. *University of California Press*, distributed by *Cambridge University Press*, 28s., paperback 12s. 6d.

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ward no idea that he does not contradict a few pages later. In his life, he belonged in all camps and none. Never was he truer to himself than at the end in 1936 when, after accepting the generals' rebellion against the Republic for which he had once fought against the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, he violently repudiated their nationalism and died in isolation, reviled by both parties. He had never chosen a standpoint except in opposition. To make a free choice might have brought him peace of mind, a state which he despised. "Suffering is the substance of life and the root of personality," he wrote in one of the few passages in this book to which he seems to have remained constant, "and suffering is universal. Suffering is that which unites all us living beings together; it is the universal or divine blood that flows through us all. That which we call will, what is it but suffering?"

This suffering which, as Unamuno believed, united the human race arose from a man's uncertainty of survival after death. "The supreme human need," he wrote, "is the need of not dying, the need of enjoying for ever the plenitude of our own limitation." "I cannot conceive the liberty of a heart," he stated in an earlier passage, "or the tranquillity of a conscience that are not sure of their perdurability after death." Without this sureness life had for him no meaning. If he had been able to accept some belief, the Christian or another, he would then have lacked that "unquietude and passionate desire" upon which he insisted as a symbol of human dignity. Unamuno cherished his suffering, and refused to part with it except on the highest terms imaginable: he demanded a future life not of God's devising but of his own. A mere survival of the spirit would not content him since it would suggest a merging of the personality in some greater whole. Nor could he bear the idea of reincarnation or recurrence; the latter, as put forward by Nietzsche, he called "a sorry counterfeit of immortality." He set himself the task of creating his own afterlife as a continuation of the life of the body. No time-body or spirit-body would do, only the stocky Basque frame of the Rector of Salamanca striding on in all perpetuity. In the same way he undertook to create his image of the Eternal Father by dint of believing in Him, and to mould his own suffering by process of disbelieving in Him. His aim was to create all things anew for himself from the beginning.

In the opening pages of his book (just reissued as a Fontana paperback), Unamuno contended that all philosophies are subjective, and proved to his own satisfaction that Kant, the most systematic of modern thinkers, merely constructed the universe that he desired. Thus, at a stroke, he justified his own wildest flights into subjectivity. Had he gone for his authority to Christ himself or the Buddha, he would have had more difficulty in refuting their statements. But he refused all belief in *gnosis*; faith was, for him, at best *pistis*, a confidence that was far from permanent. Mysticism he pronounced dangerous, since "it absorbs our own personality in God, and so does not save our vital longing." He was compelled therefore to create a Christ also in the image of his own desire, a figure far more akin to Prometheus than to the teacher of the Gospels. He addresses his "Cristo de Velázquez," the hero of his most sustained poem, as one who suffers for man, not as a saviour but a champion—

Porque has muerto
de pie, como hombre, no acostado en tierra
*como una bestia; cual columna erguida.**

—but who does not point the way along which man may travel after him. Except when He suffered on the cross Christ had little reality for Unamuno. Don Quixote and Sancho, who had lived, as he claimed, only by forcing their author Miguel de Cervantes to believe in them, con-

* Because you died on your feet like man, not lying on the ground like an animal; like a standing column.

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cerned him more intimately. The knight represented the Spanish quality of imposing dream on reality. He was more real than his creator, and thus offered Miguel de Unamuno a certain hope, if not confidence, that he could so impose himself on his Creator that He would be compelled to grant him a similar immortality. Unreason could go no further, but Unamuno delighted in wearing the armour of unreason and tilting with the lance of absurdity.

Is it possible to grant Unamuno his immortality by believing in him? As a philosopher he is wilfully absurd, an intellectual playing at paradox, the creator of a world the deliberate contradictions of which freely reflect his inner disputes. Señor José Ferrater Mora does his best to systematise his thought, as Julián Marías did ten years before him, but succeeds better in presenting the man.

Unamuno's deepest belief was in the necessity of suffering and the permanence in the world of a state of war. His addiction to suffering derives from an ascetic thread in mediæval Christianity that is most evident in such mystics as Henry Suso, and that probably survives now in Spanish Catholicism alone. But the self-lacerations of Suso served the purpose of so weakening the flesh that the spirit should shine through; and at a given moment he abandoned them. Yet others, not in Spain alone, view suffering and the preoccupation with suffering as an end in itself. When a year or two ago a Vedantist observed in a London hall that man has a right to happiness, members of his audience objected that this was not so since even Christ had suffered. The Indian replied that Christ did not dwell on suffering as we do, since He was a being on a very different level. The right to happiness seemed to Unamuno, as to these questioners, a rather shabby thing. "All religion," he wrote, "has sprung historically from the cult of the dead," and death, a departure for an unknown future, is—at least in anticipation—an act of suffering. But religion is also a pointer to the way of salvation. It is the means of creating in man an immortal body, or it is merely a comforter. For Unamuno it was neither. It was just another pretext for suffering.

In his capacity as poetic creator, Unamuno certainly achieved his immortality. The philosophic writings are for those who enjoy the spectacle of existential predicaments. As a poet Unamuno survives in the small body of his work and in his influence on his successors. His poem on Velázquez' "Christ" stores up the anguish that trickles through the long chapters of *The Tragic Sense* and discharges it in a torrent. Mingling the imagery of the New Testament and the pagan Mediterranean tradition, Unamuno presents Christ against a background of his beloved Castilian highlands as a sacrificial bull:

> *Tú, blanco Toro de lunada frente,*
> *Toro entero y sin mancha, que tan sólo*
> *te doblegaste de la cruz al yugo,*
> *regando con tu sangre nuestra tierra,*
> *que es el ara del templo de tu Padre;*
> *becerro expiatorio. . . .**

The sacrifice was for Spain. Unamuno was a national poet even though, reading in fourteen languages, he quoted freely from the Greeks and from the English poets (Tennyson and Browning, in particular). Like all those of his generation he was obsessed with the destiny of his country, which seemed as agonised as his own. Spain was for him her past, for which Christ had died, in which the Inquisition had triumphed over foreign thought, in which Don Quixote had made fiction live, in which Calderón had proclaimed that "good deeds are not lost though performed in dreams." Unamuno's poetry was shaped by dream out of the hard rock of reality. The roughness and directness of his language, his sense of urgency and uncertainty, his love of a bare landscape and of Biblical simplicity, served as an example to the generation that followed the Civil War, for whom agony was a commonplace. His place is similar to that of Thomas Hardy in our own poetic history. He destroyed the last colour-box of Romantic language, and restored the strict black and white of the spoken word. But he also played the part of Hopkins to his successors, showing them how a poem could be built out of theme and countertheme, and leaving them to resolve it (as Blas de Otero has done) by crying for a peace and freedom that Unamuno despised. Here perhaps is the final paradox. Ignored by Lorca's generation, who made their poetry as he did out of dream and idea, he has become the patron and ancestor of their successors. He has gained his immortality, but on terms that he could never have imagined.

J. M. Cohen

* You, white bull with the half-moon (of your horns) on your forehead, intact and unblemished bull who, so alone, bent to the yoke of the cross, bathing with your blood our soil, which is the altar of the Lord's temple; sacrificial calf. . . .

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CRUISE No. 40 6th to 22nd Sept., 1963
YUGOSLAVIA, GREECE, CYPRUS TURKEY
VENICE, DUBROVNIK, OLYMPIA, KNOSSOS, MALLIA, ANTALYA, PERGE, ASPENDOS, KYRENIA, BELLAPAIS, ST. HILARION, NICOSIA *or* SOLI & VOUNI, RHODES, KAMIROS, DELOS, MYKONOS, SAMOTHRACE, TROY, BOSPHORUS, ISTANBUL, EPHESUS *or* PRIENE, ATHENS, DAPHNI & ELEUSIS *or* SOUNION *or* BRAURON (*Optional overnight stay in ATHENS with visit to:* DAPHNI, OSIOS LOUKAS & DELPHI; *or* DAPHNI, MYCENAE & OLD CORINTH), VENICE

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LETTERS

Co-existing

I would like to add some evidence to confirm Anthony Hartley's conclusion [Encounter, September] that discussions of peaceful co-existence with representatives of the Communist bloc can serve a very useful purpose. While I have not participated in conferences of the type held at Selsdon Park I have conducted a number of discussions, mainly by correspondence, which have always ended with the party on the Communist side refusing to answer my questions.

My conclusion from these experiences is that, while Communists may sincerely want peace, they are extremely reluctant to face the possibility that modifications in Communist doctrine and policy may be essential to replace the present dangerous situation of mutual deterrence by one of peaceful competition. I remember Aneurin Bevan saying in 1954, "When Communists talk of peace they only mean that they would like the fruits of victory without war." The vital question for the non-Communist world is whether Communist professions of desire for peace mean more than this. The answer must depend on the decisions which Communists would make if they ever faced choices which they have so far always evaded because they find the issues so emotionally disturbing that they do not like to think about them. It follows that the possibility of peaceful co-existence, as opposed to mutual deterrence, can only be determined through the type of discussion at which Communists would be under pressure to answer the questions which they prefer to evade.

A few years ago both Chinese and Russian organisations began by agreeing to a programme which I had suggested to clear up the major obstacle to peaceful co-existence, the mutual suspicions that the other system was inherently aggressive. I suggested that each side should state a case for suspecting that the other system might be inherently aggressive of which the other side would make a critical examination. This, I argued, could distinguish genuine reasons for suspicion from those based on misunderstanding (*e.g.*, the mutual build-up of suspicions because preparations for defence may seem to the other side to be preparations for aggression). My statement covered eight main issues and each section contained italicised questions which defenders of the Communist position would need to answer if they wished to show that the issue did not provide reasonable grounds for suspicion. After seeing this case both Chinese and Russian organisations refused to continue with the programme to which they had agreed.

This experiment is described in my book *Is Peaceful Co-existence Possible?* (Michigan State University Press, 1960), and I might suggest that this could be useful briefing for the non-Communist representatives at any future conference, enabling them to avoid the comparative lack of preparation on which Mr. Hartley comments and helping them to ask the sort of questions which the Communist representatives would have to answer if their desire for peace is not only sincere but also honest.

Lindsay of Birker

The American University,
Washington D.C.

Some Chicken

In your issue of October, 1962, I read that 122 books were published on poultry breeding in Russia. Does Encounter know that the best-seller of those was the book which told readers which was the best book on poultry breeding to buy?

J. C. Miller

Harrow-on-the-Hill

"Study of the Scourge"

Mr. David Astor's article entitled "Towards a Study of the Scourge" was read with natural interest in the Wiener Library, if only because our Institute was mentioned as one of the foundations on which his centre of "political psycho-pathology" is to rest. We wholeheartedly welcome the proposal that origins and growth of the Nazi movement be scrutinised by the most painstaking investigation, and though our material and research is largely specialised in the German story, we readily agree with Mr. Astor that "inhumanity and perverted morality" do not "belong particularly to one category of the human race."

I believe this fact was strikingly illustrated by the emergence even in Britain of a faction which unashamedly calls itself "National Socialist," proclaiming that "Hitler was right." Indeed "political psycho-pathology" even before the rise of a definite Nazi threat is a subject much in need of attention wherever there is a feeling of national humiliation, a lack of confidence in the future, economic insecurity refined by the attritions of inflation, a decline in generous thought, frustrated cynicism, and a tendency towards violence.

But while analysis and interpretation of the historical experience is essential, sight must not be lost of the equally urgent duty first of all to spread the knowledge of what precisely it was that happened, for strange though it may seem, the rudimentary facts of Nazi history are by no means widely known, outside Germany no more than inside. They are often either no longer remembered, or among the younger generation, they have not yet been learnt, or again, where known, they are not believed, for the simple reason that, as Mr. Astor says, "they still seem to us impossible, incredible." This reaction, in turn, may well aid and abet the dangerous tendency, making itself increasingly felt, to re-write history in a way which suggests that what happened was not really quite as our own eyes have taught us.

To be sure, such a debunking of history is nothing new. Germans once claimed that Jesus had been one of them; Egyptians that Shakespeare was

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Life & Letters Today

New York

A PROPOSAL *to televise an open-air production of "The Merchant of Venice" in New York this week is meeting with vigorous opposition from the city's board of rabbis. They say their protest is aimed chiefly at televising the play, since the theatre audience "will be mature and sophisticated and comparatively limited" in numbers. The television audience, however, will be a mass one, and will include impressionable children, and many of the adult viewers "would not pass muster on the score of intellectual maturity."*

Elmer Rice, Chairman of the Council on Freedom from Censorship, says that if every religious, ethnic, and professional group succeeded in suppressing whatever it regards as inimical to its special interests, "the guarantees of the Bill of Rights would become a mockery and the arts would be reduced to a level of unendurable vapidity." THE TIMES

Formento

"I AM *very puzzled. Why do English literary editors allow three columns of space to a new book about china-ware or James I, but spare much less space than that to a review of four or five novels, each of which gets only a few paragraphs? Do the English prefer information to imagination?"*

This question, pressed earnestly by a young German critic during a pause in the recent Prix Formentor conference at Majorca, is one of extreme interest. Let us begin [writes Nigel Dennis] by answering it in the bluntest way.

English editors cram five novels into one short review because that is all the space these novels deserve. It is extremely difficult to write a good piece of fiction, but not nearly so difficult to write intelligently about dead kings and bone-china.

This is the plain explanation of the English way. It is to be preferred a hundred times to the common illusion that there is always more "art" in fiction than there can be in facts. Sound information is always a pleasure, but bad fiction is always an agony.

The most worrying thing about this matter is that nowadays everybody sets great store by what is called "creative" writing. Writers themselves do, and many a writer who could produce intelligent criticism or useful information about rhododendrons deems it higher and better to "create" a stolid, deathly work of fiction. SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

"IF," *said Robert Graves, the poet, in an Oxford address, "every Englishman were content to undergo a normal education, work hard in a regular job, order his life reasonably, marry a sensible woman, pay his taxes when required, be socially co-operative and count himself happy in such well-doing, then there would be little need for poets."*

DAILY MAIL

New York

"IT IS *a curious thought," writes Prof. Loren Eiseley, "that as I sit down to write this essay on the history of our species, I do so in the heightened consciousness that it may never be published: a holocaust may overtake it. Tomorrow I may lie under trees or rubble, precipitated into the street along with the paper on which this history is scribbled. . . ."*

HORIZON MAGAZINE

Bucharest

IN *the coffee-houses and newly-opened espresso bars—which in eastern Europe are themselves symbols of political relaxation—young people are more ready to talk and inquire. Why is it, a serious-minded student asked, that in Rumania Evtushenko's poems are not translated when nowadays we read and are familiar with most of modern Western literature until recently banned as decadent and dangerous?*

Other, more representative members of his generation, dance in Bucharest's night-clubs declaiming "we want twist" in the same manner as perhaps only a few hours before, at some university conference, they were acclaiming the party and shouting prescribed slogans appropriate for such political occasions. THE TIMES

London

A GUIDEBOOK FOR SOCIAL ASTRONAUTS *decrees that definitions like "With it" and "In and Out" have become obsolete and should be revised in the light of current space terminology and conditions. People and behaviour patterns are now to be graded into three categories:* GO—*as when referring to a rocket launched correctly on course and on target which travels in the right orbit.* ROGUE—*as when referring to a rocket released on the right course which then goes badly astray and ends up off target and in the wrong orbit.* ABORT—*as when referring to a rocket which never gets into orbit at all, or which never gets off the launching pad. Here we have picked some relevant extracts from the Guidebook:*

READING MATTER. GO *people read these newspapers and magazines:* ENCOUNTER, Life (U.S. Edition), Movie, Anarchy, Economist, Paris-Match, Elle. ROGUE *reading:* Daily Express, Financial Times, Playboy, The Daily Telegraph, Time, Esquire, Show, Private Eye, Spectator. *All other British newspapers are* ABORT: *so is* Newsweek. *Reading* The Times *is especially* ABORT: *doing* The Times *crossword is* GO *if you are under 30,* ABORT *if over.*

GO *writers: James Purdy, Nabokov, Saul Bellow, Joseph Heller.* ROGUE *writers: John Osborne, Noel Coward, Michael Frayn, Françoise Sagan, Norman Mailer, Salinger.* ABORT *writers: C. P. Snow, Vance Packard, C. Northcote Parkinson, Jack Kerouac.*

THE QUEEN

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an Arab, and Alfred Rosenberg insisted that the Christians under Diocletian, being "subversives," merely got what they deserved.

More recently, Mr. A. J. P. Taylor has discovered new "origins" of the Hitler war, and the measure of his achievement is the enthusiasm he has aroused on the German Right-wing where the "revisionists" have long been at work. Their burrowings are less conspicuous but far more insidious than the ado created by the run of neo-Nazi politicians, for they prepare the ground on which the demagogues can hope to prosper.

The "re-writing" has already gone to extraordinary lengths. The whole of the Hitler era is being blamed on the Treaty of Versailles; the Battle of Britain (it is said) was never lost because it was never fought as the Nazis never intended to invade Britain; the extermination of millions of Jews is either denied or minimised; and above all, Hitler is boosted as the far-seeing champion of a "united Europe" against Bolshevism.

It would be quite wrong to disregard such wanton distortions of recent history. They are by no means confined to a lunatic fringe; they are spreading fast, even, occasionally, in quarters that may otherwise claim to be considered respectable, and those who feel tempted to laugh, might, with profit, remember the advice given in Molière's play: "So much the worse for him who laughs."

It thus becomes imperative to state and re-state the authentic record authoritatively and on the strength of unassailable evidence. We in the Wiener Library are engaged in precisely this work. Our efforts, we hope, will serve a practical as well as a scholarly purpose. They will increase and reinforce the knowledge of what happened, and they will at once expose the false prophets who seek to vindicate the evil of the past. In doing so we would provide the background and the inspiration for that study of "political psycho-pathology" which Mr. Astor has in mind. It is to be hoped that the initiative now taken will not wither away but rather, in due course, produce an effort worthy of the task which has been so gallantly tackled.

C. C. Aronsfeld
Asst. Director

The Wiener Library,
London

Playing with "Pale Fire"

As we might expect, at the end of Miss Mary McCarthy's giddy flight waits the spider Nabokov.

(Nova) Zembla is also the "region of a malignant diety, called Criticism." She is to be found "extended in her den, upon the spoils of numberless volumes half-devoured. At her right hand [sits] Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age; at her left, Pride, her mother, dressing her up in the scraps of paper herself had torn. There was Opinion, her sister, light of foot, hoodwinked, and headstrong, yet giddy, and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dullness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry and Ill-Manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat... her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself; her diet was the overflowing of her own gall...."

I omit the less elegant details which are to be found, of course, in *The Battle of the Books*. People who play with *Pale Fire*....

McCarthy-Nabokov in five plus three:

McCARTHY—harm cyt [*sc. cit.*] (notable tendency)
(*hark-hack-hock-hook-book*)
(*cat-can-van*)
book van—NABOKOV (ditto)

Arnold Goldman
University of Manchester

Ehrenburg Again

Somewhat belatedly I would like to record some comments on Mr. Fyvel's article about Mr. Ehrenburg [Encounter, Dec. 1961].

I do not wish to appear as a defender of Mr. Ehrenburg. I have criticised him sharply myself. But I do believe that several of Mr. Fyvel's assumptions are not well founded. In part, perhaps this stems from his writing before the full extent of Mr. Ehrenburg's memoirs had become known. He criticises Mr. Ehrenburg for a lack of frankness, particularly with regard to a number of his literary colleagues, some of them Jewish, who became victims of Stalin. However, the subsequent instalments of the memoirs seem to me to contain the answer to most of Mr. Fyvel's criticisms. Mr. Ehrenburg, for whatever reason, has made a special point of discussing his relationship with each of the martyred writers and has gone out of his way to be more than usually frank.

So far as *The Stormy Life of Lasik Roitschwantz* is concerned, it seems to me that Mr. Fyvel rather overvalues its literary qualities. It is clearly in the same genre as works of Ilf and Petrov, although Ehrenburg's "Rascal" is a Yiddish one. It seems to me Mr. Ehrenburg's complaint against the violation of copyright is a justified one. Certainly the mere fact that the Soviet publishing industry violates Western copyright is no excuse for our following their bad example.

It seems to me, also, that any reader of the memoirs is bound to realise from what Mr. Ehrenburg says, and does not say, that there were many doubts in his mind so far as the Soviet régime was concerned in its early years. Mr. Fyvel's suggestion that he "slides over" the point that he was in Paris during much of the purge period has been clearly answered in the current instalments now being published by *Novy Mir*.

The suggestion that he suddenly embraced anti-Zionism does not seem to be borne out by the facts. I myself have heard him, back during the wartime days when he was an active member of the Anti-Fascist Committee, inveigh against Zionism in the same terms that he used in October, 1948.

The remarks attributed to him about his lack of knowledge as to the fate of Fefer, Bergelson, and Markish seems to one to have been made by Boris Polevoi, who is quite a different person.

The implication of Mr. Fyvel's article appears to be that Ehrenburg enjoyed a special position of

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some kind, such as a secret agent for Beria during his years in Paris and later in Moscow. This seems to me to be most unlikely. It is founded in a viewpoint that assumes that everything in the Soviet Union is either black or white. Actually, one could make the same kind of case over Pasternak's "curious" ability to survive the purge years. The plain fact seems to be that there were many aberrations in the Soviet Union and that Ehrenburg's description of the situation as a lottery is probably not far from being accurate. In Ehrenburg's case Stalin had good reason to feel that Ehrenburg had been of the greatest service to the state. Ehrenburg's flaming anti-German propaganda was credited by many as having been one of the major features in enabling the Red Army to withstand the horrible trials of the autumn of 1941 and the winter of 1942.

This is not to suggest that Ehrenburg cuts a very fair figure so far as qualities of sincerity or heroism are concerned. To survive under Stalin certainly required the cunning of a fox and, sometimes, the instincts of a wolf. But I do think that in his memoirs at least Ehrenburg is doing his best, in his own way, to make some penance for the sins of which he is no doubt guilty.

HARRISON E. SALISBURY

The New York Times

T. R. FYVEL *writes:* I agree that if the latest sections of Ehrenburg's autobiography had been available a year ago, I would have made a few changes of detail in my article, but it would not have altered my basic viewpoint which incidentally tallies with Mr. Salisbury's last paragraph. To say that I made Ehrenburg out to be a special agent of Beria's at the time of Stalin's anti-Jewish purges seems to me fantasy: what I said was that during this grim period Ehrenburg enjoyed some special personal protection, as Mr. Salisbury also suggests.

"Viridiana"

MR. J. M. COHEN, in his reflections on "Viridiana" (ENCOUNTER, July) treats it primarily as an indictment of Franco's Spain. In America this element has been noticed, but the greater emphasis, at least in the daily press, falls on its presumed religious content, saluting it as a profoundly disquieting recourse to blasphemy as disinfectant against false piety. For this reason I attended its recent opening in San Francisco. I wanted to see what a first rate contemporary blasphemer was capable of when he set his hand to it. But I came out feeling strangely "thrown," not shocked but simply let down, "miffed," as if the whole point of the action, the ostensible point, had never materialised. And there was the growing feeling that my leg had been pulled without my quite discovering how. Later I realised that what I had seen was not "a strange drama of shattering power," as the movie columns capsule it, but a sensational hoax. Parody, perhaps, would be the more accurate word, but a parody that goes unnoticed becomes, by that token, a *de facto* hoax.

There is plenty of blasphemy in *Viridiana*, but strictly speaking it is not a blasphemous work at all, for the simple reason that it is not about religion. What it is about is the vogue for highbrow religious-content films propagated by Messrs. Bergman and Fellini, which it debunks. The clue is the pigeon-feather episode which spoofs the pillow-feather scene closing the orgy in *La Dolce Vita*. The treatment of the rape almost mocks the sensitivity of that in *Virgin Spring*. The sleep-walking sequence is pure Bergman, but corned up, right down to the ashes in the bed. I do not know what else Buñuel has put his finger on (I have not seen *The Seventh Seal*) but the whole character of Viridiana herself is a palpable travesty on what might be called the Bergman Woman. Everywhere the symbolism is fantastically heavy-handed and forced (as, for instance, the skipping-rope which Mr. Cohen mentions). Consequently, many of the scenes are, in retrospect, hideously funny.

It looks as if Buñuel took down the books and decided to make a thorough job of it, item by item, from the deceptively straight-faced gravity of the opening to the jeering, outrageous punchline at the end. But my point is that the actual force of the indictment does not fall upon false piety, Franco's Spain, or anything else that is "real." These ingredients, with the blasphemy, are directed to another end. Buñuel's attack is against the successes of his colleagues, and the vogue they have created. It is as if he were to say, "You have taken these symbols, these situations, and construed them in such a way as to demonstrate the supposed religious implications of man's existence. Very well. I will, as a convinced atheist, take these same symbols, these same situations, and run them through the meat grinder backwards, so construing them as to demonstrate the exact opposite. And in doing so I will make fools of you and your whole pretentious cult, because you, especially you, Mr. Bergman, take yourself so damned seriously that you lay yourself wide open. A strong mixture of burlesque and blasphemy, served up in the plausible guise of your current "religious encounter" vogue, will impale you on your own crucifix."

And because no one could believe that a man would perpetrate such blasphemy for so trivial an end, and in such abominable taste, the crude insult is taken for unflinching integrity, and the travesty becomes a hoax. A Grand Prix at Cannes and condemnation in Franco's Spain sealed the issue. Now the intellectual world, conditioned by Swedish existentialism and Italian mythologising to swing from symbol to symbol, discounts the paucity of motivation as the purest aesthetic obliqueness, and flocks to pay homage to the great violational drama that unmasks the roots, and delineates the end, of false piety. I wish it did, for there is still plenty of it about. But I am afraid that the man who made it is laughing himself sick wondering how long the game will last. "I have belched in their faces," he exults, "and they applaud my fine tenor voice!"

BROTHER ANTONINUS

St. Albert's College,
Oakland,
California

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T. S. Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize for poetry. He is a director of Faber & Faber....

Dwight Macdonald is on the staff of *The New Yorker* (wherein portions of the present article first appeared in an obituary of James Agee).

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Signature of business manager: John Hall.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of September, 1962, Ronald S. Friedman (a Commissioner for Oaths for life).

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In honesty, however, it must be admitted that other readers find it hard to stomach. They complain that it is unsettling — even dangerous and that its contents are too sharp and pungent for general taste.

Harper's has never been produced for the mass market. Its founders designed it 112 years ago for a small, specific clientele. They had no other choice.

A century ago, before the days of universal public education, the so-called educated class was the only group that had the ability, the leisure, and the money to read much of anything. It was, in effect, the governing class of the United States — those people in the professions, industry, and public service who largely decided the issues and set the standards of taste for the rest of the population.

Within six months of its founding, the magazine had reached a circulation of 50,000 copies, a remarkable figure for the time. (The editor — a young man named Henry J. Raymond — was encouraged by this success to branch out on his own; he founded The New York Times.)

Harper's was treasured by its subscribers; hundreds of them bound their old copies into leather-covered volumes, and carried them across the plains in covered wagons or around the Horn to the gold camps of California. By the light of whale-oil lamps they were read aloud in innumerable family circles from Maine to Oregon. By the time the Civil War broke, Harper's was firmly established as the leading national monthly — "a mirror," as a later editor put it, "of American life and ideas."

During the succeeding generations, Harper's has, of course, undergone many changes in format, content, and editorial techniques. Yet its chosen audience remains much the same; those people who assay considerably higher than average in discrimination, actual curiosity, and concern for the national well-being. As a result, it has developed certain characteristics:

1. *It deals primarily with ideas.* Especially the ideas which will make important news a year — or five or ten years — later. In fields ranging from oceanography to economics, from the theatre to religion, Harper's tries to find the fresh, seminal thinkers whose ideas may have a real impact on the future shape of the world.

2. *It provides a highly selective kind of news coverage.* Harper's makes no attempt to cover the ephemeral happenings which fill about 90 per cent of the space in the daily press. What it does attempt to report are those events and personalities that may have a lasting significance — and it tries to cover them in a more authoritative, carefully considered, and analytic fashion than the daily or weekly publications can ordinarily achieve. Harper's articles have shaken up state governments, labor unions, political parties, and state and federal laws.

3. *It seeks an independent assessment of public issues.* Harper's keeps apart from any party, pressure group, or commercial interest. It peddles no ideology, grinds no private axes. It tries to reflect the widest possible spectrum of responsible opinion — including many opinions with which the editors personally disagree. It is skeptical of the public relations counsellor and the official pronouncement. It has a special respect for the sharp-eyed individual observer who, as Frederick Lewis Allen, former editor of Harper's, once said: ". . . . sits all by himself, unorganized, unrecognized, unorthodox, and unterrified."

4. *It welcomes controversy.* The mass media usually have to shun controversial subjects, because they dare not risk offending any substantial number of their readers. Harper's does not try to woo everybody — and it assumes that its kind of reader is tough-minded enough to enjoy a lively argument, even when it rubs him on a raw spot. Consequently, Harper's is able to examine the behaviour of Sacred Cows — for example, U.S. Savings Bonds, the veterans' and farmers' lobbies, the giant charity fund-raising outfits, and the F.B.I. — with a candour not often found elsewhere.

5. *It provides a vehicle for the artist in literature.* The short story writer, the poet, the essayist, the critic, and the humorist find here a welcome for their best work — uncramped by popular formulas or conventional forms. And the work of an entirely unknown writer is considered just as eagerly as that of a William Faulkner or Arthur Miller.

All too often these five standards measure the aspirations rather than the accomplishments of the editors. Yet now and then they feel that they have come somewhere near the mark, and that a proportion of the things they publish may have a permanent value.

We hope that at least some of those who try Harper's will find the flavour robust, well matured, and a pleasure. In the meantime, we have tried to explain why some people *don't* buy Harper's. *And* why *many do.*

What better time to start your Harper's subscription. You may have 14 monthly issues for only 30 shillings at the special new reader's-rate.

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